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JERUSALEM

PALESTINIAN WEEKLY

(USPS 686-630)

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Despite Appeals

Geneva Summit Ignores Middle East

The leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States concluded November 21 their summit meeting in Geneva amidst reports of agreement between the two superpowers. However, no decision was made regarding the Middle East conflict.

Discussed in the summit were three subjects — arms control, regional conflict and human rights. Observers, however, predicted little chance of agreement between the two countries on any of these three issues.

Reports from Geneva said the Middle East conflict, which was to be discussed as a regional conflict, did not occupy a prominent place in the discussions. Governments of the Middle East have sent appeals to the two superpowers to reach an agreement on the Middle East crisis, particularly the Palestinian question, in order to break the no-war, no-peace state of affairs in the region.

Here in the West Bank and Gaza a petition (see box p. 13) signed by representatives of national institutions was cabled to the two leaders calling on them to recognize the will of the Palestinian people to be represented by the PLO in any peace talks. The cable stressed the role of the PLO and urged the convening of an international conference on the Middle East issue.

The Orthodox Jewish anti-Zionist *Neturei Karta* organization, with bases in Jerusalem, London and New York, also cabled the Soviet president urging him to stop Soviet Jews who wish to emigrate from coming to Israel. It said, addressing Gorbachev, "For those (Soviet Jews) who wish to change their place of residence, please limit their exit permits to anywhere on earth they choose to emigrate to, save that of the Holy Land, which Jewish imposters dominate against the will of the people who populated it before the Zionist incursion into the Middle East."

Israel has been waging a strong propaganda war against the Soviet Union using Soviet Jews for that purpose. It claimed Jews in the Soviet Union have their rights infringed upon and are not allowed the right to emigrate.

In an interview with the Arabic *Al Fajr* daily, Uzi Borstein, member of the Central Committee of the Israeli Communist Party, denied that Soviet Jews were being mistreated. Borstein said he saw with his own eyes how Soviet Jews were happy where they were. He said he met many Jews in the Soviet Union when he visited that country a year and a half ago as part of an Israeli parliamentary delegation.

None, he said, complained of their living situation.

Borstein said the Jews who wished to emigrate from the Soviet Union because of their opposition to communism had already done so. However, he said, the majority of them went to the US rather than Israel.

The Reagan-Gorbachev summit is the first in six years between the two superpowers. The last meeting was held in 1979 between former US President Jimmy Carter and former Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev in Vienna. The SALT II agreement was signed at that summit.

Israel Tightens Grip on Nablus Electric

Nablus residents fear the Israeli National Electricity Company is licking its lips in anticipation of once again linking part of the city with the Israeli grid. The move, they say, could prove to be a fatal blow to the nationalist Nablus Electricity Network.

Al Fajr has learned that Israeli military authorities appear to be stepping up their attempts to take over parts of Nablus from the local electricity network in order to complete the linkage before an expected turnover of the municipality to an Arab council, possibly to Thafer al-Masri, head of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce. This would in theory leave a very small and weakened local electricity company for al-Masri and the municipality to run, thus possibly forcing al-Masri's hand in turning the whole city over to the Israeli company. In addition, it would help to consolidate Israeli control over this largest city in the West Bank, the political ramifications of which are frightening to Nablus nationalists.

Nablus engineers told *Al Fajr* the most recent Israeli attack on the Nablus electricity company began almost three weeks ago when military officials began to make a series of adjustments to accommodate a switch to Israeli current. The effects of such adjustments included an electricity blackout in some of the city's most densely populated areas for several hours. The engineers told *Al Fajr* that they believe this was done on purpose in order to further convince residents of the need to link with the Israeli grid. Other measures used to convince consumers, they say, include charging very high rates for current from the local company.

The engineers reported that in addition to making the necessary adjustments, top Israeli military officials began to make mysterious visits to the Nablus company's offices. They said the officers as well as engineers and administrators of the Israeli National Electricity Company began to make surprise visits to the city's main electricity station and to the several branches in order to gather needed data. An Israeli official from the military headquarters in Nablus visited the electricity company November 17 for the first time ever. Workers said he inspected company records and took down information.

Some of the company employees told *Al Fajr* that they have been threatened in an Israeli attempt to extract technical information from them. They said that top military officers who never visited the company station before are now making regular visits to inspect records and gather data.

According to *Al Fajr* sources, the Israeli officials intend to link the southern part and some of the western areas of Nablus to the Israeli grid. The area would include Balatta refugee camp, Huwaro, Rafidia, the Rafidia Hospital, Jnaid and Ain Beit Elma refugee camp. The area normally consumes 3000 kilowatts of electricity.

The Third Stage

This new Israeli attempt is the third in a series of moves to eventually link the entire city to Israeli power, residents say. When the Israelis took over the city municipality three years ago from Mayor Bassam Shaka'a, who was dismissed for refusing to deal with the 'civil administration,' they began steps to bring down the Nablus Electricity Network. The Israeli 'mayor' indicated on many occasions that the local company was not run well and that the solution to the city's power problems would be to link it to the Israeli company. In order to convince residents of his scheme, *Al Fajr* sources say, he raised the price of Nablus current 1300 percent. Although it is true that the price of current is more expensive now, Nablus employees say that the current price is now as much as 40 percent higher than the actual cost. They say that this price hike is designed to exasperate the consumers who will then accept the change to the Israeli grid under the guise of cheaper, more efficient service.

The Israeli plan was first put into action in September 1984 when the western part of Nablus was linked to the Israeli grid. The area encompassed the city of Anabta and seven other villages, all consuming a total of 3000 kilowatts. Soon after that, a second phase to link the eastern section of the city began. The section included a large industrial area, the two refugee camps of Askar, the water pumps in the Badan and Fara Valleys and the villages of Badan and Taluza.

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One Man Dead

Discrimination Cited in Treatment of Kidney Patients

Mohammad Abu Rajab and his family.

by Maher Abukhater

Medical discrimination against Palestinian Arabs has been blamed for last week's death of a Jerusalem man, which may have inadvertently led to the life of another.

Muhammad Abu Rajab, 34, a resident of al-Sa'adieh neighborhood in the Old City of Jerusalem, died November 9 of kidney failure. Abu Rajab had struggled hard for eight months to control his kidney illness. But, caught between hospital fees, official unconcern and poverty, Abu Rajab and his kidneys failed to continue the fight any longer.

However, Abu Rajab's death may have brought life to another Old City resident of the same poor neigborhood suffering from the same disease. Zuhair Natshe, 31, has experienced the same difficulties Abu Rajah did in seeking treatment for his kidney illness. It was only after Abu Rajab's death and the local press' attention to his story that the Israeli Hadassah Hospital and the Health Ministry changed their tune and offered Natshe the care he needed.

When the story of Abu Rajab's death broke in the local newspapers, Hadassah Hospital — which for four months had refused to put Natshe on hemodialysis and instead treated him with the less expensive, but far more painful peritoneal dialysis — called him up to tell him he would be able to receive the treatment he needs. On November 17, Natshe went to Hadassah Hospital where he received his first hemodialysis treatment at the hospital. He will continue to receive this treatment at the rate of three times a week.

Abu Rajab

The story begins unfortunately with the dead man — Abu Rajab. When he became ill with renal failure, he went to Hadassah Hospital for treatment. Although he had the Israeli Histadrut (labor union) medical insurance — *Kupat Holim* — the hospital refused to admit him claiming that his insurance did not cover the costs of hemodialysis because he had had the disease before buying into the Histadrut insurance plan. Unable to pay cash for the hemodialysis, Abu Rajab was turned away.

The sick man then tried to convince *Kupat Holim* officials to cover the cost of the hemodialysis treatment which involves hooking up a patient to an artificial kidney machine through which his blood circulates, is cleansed and later returned to his body. Blood circulation is done intravenously and takes four to six hours to complete. It must be done three times a week. *Kupat Holim* officials, however, refused to pay.

When Abu Rajab's condition deteriorated further, he went again to Hadassah Hospital. They finally agreed to give him peritoneal dialysis which requires inserting a catheter into the abdomen. Certain liquids are then sent into the stomach where they stay inside for several minutes and then are taken out again through another catheter also inserted into the abdomen. The painful process is intended to reduce the level of urea in the blood. It can either be done six hours daily or the liquids be left in for a 40-hour stretch once every two weeks to a month.

Abu Rajab endured a few treatments of peritoneal dialysis, but continued to try for hemodialysis treatment. He even went to Ramallah Government Hospital but was turned away because he was not a West Bank resident. Finally, after developing complications from the peritoneal dialysis and Hadassah's continued refusal to hook him up to the artificial kidney machine, his health failed him completely. Abu Rajab's death certificate said he died of renal failure end stage, peritonitis, and pneumonia.

Dr. Nafez Nubani, a family and community physician, commenting to *Al Fajr* on Abu Rajab's death confirmed that kidney disease requires intensified treatment in order to prevent death. Both of Abu Rajab's kidneys failed to function properly which required that he receive immediate treatment. When he did not, Abu Rajab died of kidney failure and the complications caused by it. He left behind a wife and three children.

Natshe

Following publication of Abu Rajab's story, Hadassah Hospital officials were moved — possibly out of fear of a malpractice suit — to improve Zuhair Nathshe's treatment. Natshe's story is also one of discrimination against a poor Palestinian.

In the course of events while Natshe's family were negotiating with Hadassah over rendering treatment to Zuhair, Natshe's brother asked the responsible physician why they were lax in giving Zuhair treatment. "Is it because we are Arabs?" the brother asked. "You said it," the doctor replied.

But this was not the only cause for the Natshe family to believe they had been discriminated against. When Natshe sought treatment at Hadassah, the hospital gave him also peritoneal dialysis. According to Natshe, this treatment was extremely painful. He said there were times during the treatment when he lost awareness of what was going on around him, even though he was fully awake. His family told of a time when Natshe returned home after the treatment feeling very badly, extremely uptight, fighting with everyone in the house and unable to distinguish his own wife or two children.

When the family realized that peritoneal dialysis was hurting their son, they sought treatment some other place. They decided to take him to Tel Aviv to a special center for kidney disease. There he received hemodialysis.

Natshe felt more comfortable with this treatment. But he had to pay US 250 dollars every time he received it which proved very costly. He said he could have received the same treatment free at Hadasssah Hospital on their machine. Hadassah, however, had told him they didn't have the machine although family members later discovered they did. Natshe is also insured with *Kupat Holim* which entitles him to receive treatment at state hospitals if referred to them by his physicians. His peritoneal treatment at Hadassah was done free of charge.

Another problem faced by Natshe was refusal of Hadassah Hospital to send nurses to his home where the treatment could be done without him travelling daily to the hospital. According to the Natshe family, the Health Ministry supported a decision by Israeli hospitals and staff not to send Israeli nurses to Arab neighborhoods for so-called 'security reasons'. The Health Ministry insists that the nurses should be accompanied by armed guards. This means only police officers or special Israeli guards since Arabs are not allowed to carry arms.

The Natshe family says they proposed providing protection with one of their own members but the ministry insisted on armed guards. The ministry, in addition, said that the Natshes should live outside the Old City in an area easily accessible by car. They also stipulated the presence of a telephone in the house.

The Natshe family agreed to these conditions and rented a house outside the city in Beit Hanina north of Jerusalem. But even then, the hospital and ministry delayed taking action on the matter.

The latest reports from the ministry say that they may have reached a decision on the issue of protection of Israeli nurses. The reports say the ministry will provide the guards at its own expense. However, until this week, the Natshe family were still negotiating with Hadassah Hospital over sending nurses to Palestinian residential areas. But after Abu Rajab's case became common knowledge, Hadassah Hospital announced that they would install a hemodialysis machine in the Natshe house. They are currently training Natshe's wife to use the artificial kidney machine.

Farid Abu Ghosh, a social worker who followed up the case of Abu Rajab from the beginning, said he is thinking anyway of filing suit against Hadassah Hospital and the Health Ministry for negligence. Abu Ghosh told *Al Fajr* his intention in filing the suit is to prevent the same thing from happening again.

The kidney failure of Abu Rajab and the suffering of Natshe have also brought to the forefront another problem. When the Israeli Health Ministry closed down the Arab Hospice Hospital in Jerusalem's Old City more than six months ago, it said that the poor residents of the Old City would be able to continue receiving free treatment at Israeli government hospitals. However, in Abu Rajab's case, when he certainly qualified as poor, the government-run Hadassah refused him treatment because he was not able to cover expenses. The Health Ministry also delayed taking action in his case until it was too late. Palestinians don't want to wait until it is too late again.

Islamic University Elections Held

Despite Israeli provocation and harassment, student council elections at the Gaza Islamic University went smoothly November 17.

More than 78 percent of the student body cast their votes. According to the University Public Relations Office, 2283 students out of a total of 2918 voted. Ismael Haniya received 1369 votes and was elected as head of the student council. Although the voting was conducted for each of the nine seats on the council individually, as opposed to running on a list, the nine seats were won by Muslim fundamentalist students. Muslim fundamentalists have traditionally dominated the university's student council.

Students from the Student Youth Movement received 570 votes and the Voluntary Work Committee's Coalition won 150 votes. A fourth group known as the Independent (Muslim) Group received 60 votes.

During the four days of campaigning that preceded the elections, Israeli troops maintained a constant presence around the campus where they stopped and briefly questioned students going in or out. Student sources said that the soldiers detained more than 30 female students on November 15. The students were taken off a bus bound for the university where they planned to participate in elections for the female student council. The Islamic University is segregated in both representative bodies and in class.

The girl students were held at the military headquarters for several hours where they were questioned about the presence of Palestinian flags found on the bus.

Gaza Farmland Bulldozed

Israeli military authorities slated more than 350 dunums of Arab agricultural land in the Gaza Strip for confiscation last week.

Al Quds newspaper reported November 15 that Israeli bulldozers have begun digging up a 130 dunum land plot south of Nezarim settlement in the northern part of the Gaza Strip. The paper reported that the Israelis are planning to use the land for Nezarim expansion. Sources in Gaza, however, say that the land plot is part of a larger area of 250 dunums which the Israelis have recently declared as 'state land'. The Israelis reportedly began fencing off the land.

Earlier in the week, Israelis bulldozed a 10-dunum citrus grove near the Israeli industrial area known as Erez.

On November 14, Israeli military authorities summoned three landowners from the village of al-Qararah, near Khan Yunis, to the city's military headquarters. The military informed them of their intention to seize more than 100 dunums of their land. Again, the Israelis claim that the property is 'state' owned.

Farmers say that most Gaza land is considered Israeli government property since it is not registered in the names of the farmers. They, however, argue that they have been farming the land for many years, even before the Israeli occupation of Arab territories in 1967.

Army Shoots Nablus Youth

Israeli soldiers opened fire without warning on a Nablus youth November 15 shooting him in the back twice as he was entering a mosque for evening prayer.

Sameh Nabih Hanbali, 16, was entering the Hanbali Mosque in the Old City of Nablus when soldiers standing nearby apparently opened fire on him for no reason. Family members said Sameh had been visiting relatives before going to pray and had not been involved in any demonstration or stone-throwing activity to warrant a response from the Israeli soldiers. Israeli authorities, however, reported that there had been stone-throwing in the city earlier in the day, but family members say the mosque area was completely quiet.

Sameh's family told *Al Fajr* that after being hit twice in the back, Sameh managed to crawl for help to a neighboring house where he collapsed. A woman at the house called other neighbors for help and they carried Sameh to the Women's Union Hospital in Nablus' new city. Family members told *Al Fajr* that nothing unusual had taken place at the time of the shooting and that the street was quiet according to inhabitants of the Old City quarter.

Basel Hanbali, Sameh's older brother who is a practicing physician in France, hurried to Sameh's bedside when he heard the news of the shooting. He told *Al Fajr* that it was a miracle his brother is still alive. Sameh's condition is still listed as critical.

Hanbali said one of the bullets entered the back damaging part of the colon and liver. Sameh required an immediate operation to repair the colon damage. In the operation some 70 centimeters of his colon were removed. Hanbali said his brother is awaiting another operation as soon as his condition permits to remove the second bullet still lodged only one centimeter from the middle of his spine.

Al Fajr learned that police came to the hospital the same evening Sameh was admitted but were prevented from trying to question him. They made another attempt the following day but doctors allowed them only a few minutes with the patient. Family members told *Al Fajr* that police were questioning Sameh as to his business in the area at the time, but family members say this is not the point they wish stressed. Why did the army shoot him in the first place, they ask?

Family members told *Al Fajr* they are now studying the possibility of filing suit against Israeli authorities for what appears to be an unwarranted shooting.

Homes Sealed, Demolished in Hebron

The Israeli military sealed three homes and demolished another in the Hebron district November 17 following the arrest of family members of the home owners.

The three sealed homes are in Sa'ir village. They are owned by the family of Jihad Amir Jaradat, Musa Darwish Jaradat and Hamid Abd al-Hamid Shalaldeh. The demolished home is in Jaba'a.

Israel Radio, which reported the sealing, alleged that the arrested Sa'ir men were members of an underground resistance group which took part in recent armed attacks against Israeli targets in the Hebron district. The arrested youths are Jihad Jaradat, 18, Musa Jaradat; 18, and three brothers from the Shalaldeh family.

The Israeli *Hadashot* newspaper, reporting on the demolished Jaba'a home, said the Israeli military earlier destroyed a small shack owned by the Jaba'a family. It said when the military learned that the family owned another home, it returned to the village and demolished the larger house.

A member of the Jaba'a family, the paper said, was a member of an armed group which on October 6 clashed with an Israeli army unit in the Hebron hills. He was identified as Muhammad Hamid al-Toss. Al-Toss received only injuries in the clash but the other four members of the group were killed. The four commandos' homes were demolished the day after they were killed.

Abu Hilal, Abd al-Jawad End Hunger Strike, Shu'aibi Hospitalized

Shu'aibi

Two Palestinian detainees slated for deportation ended a four-day hunger strike November 18.

The four West Bank and Gaza men are being held at Jnaid Prison in Nablus and the Gaza Prison awaiting an Israeli High Court hearing on their deportation. The deportation orders were issued by the Israeli military authorities three weeks ago. No date has been set for the hearing.

According to the lawyers committee defending the four men, journalist Hassan Abd al-Jawad from Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem and unionist Ali Abu Hilal from Abu Dis village near Jerusalem went on hunger strike November 13 to protest the Israeli decision to deport them. The four prisoners have repeatedly expressed their opposition to being deported. Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi, a member of al-Bireh's municipal council, told his wife the last time she saw him at Jnaid Prison two weeks ago that his expulsion was equivalent in his mind to a death sentence.

Dr. Shu'aibi, who is suffering from tuberculosis, was transferred three times last week to Hadassah Hospital for physicals to determine whether his health condition permitted his deportation or not. The Israeli military objections committee recommended two weeks ago that he undergo medical tests after two different medical teams gave conflicting reports about his health.

Suheir Shu'aibi, a Ramallah teacher, told *Al Fajr* that her husband's health has deteriorated as a result of his confinement. She said that he is suffering from breathing difficulty.

Meanwhile, four American lawyers including Wilhelm Joeseph, co-chairman of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, Mark van der Hout, president of the National Lawyers Guild, Mary Rita Luecka, vice-president of the National Lawyers Guild, and Michael Smith, Editorial Board member of *Guild Notes*, arrived in Jerusalem November 18 to follow up on attempts to deport the four men. The delegation of American lawyers was scheduled to hold a press conference at the Israeli Government Press Office in West Jerusalem November 21.

In other related events, 12 American academicians called on the Israeli authorities to cancel their decision to deport the four Palestinians. In their call, the American figures expressed their opposition to the deportation and urged that the Israeli authorities rescind their decision.

Israeli-Syrian Dogfight Over Lebanon

Tension between Israel and Syria mounted this week as their airforces clashed November 19.

According to a military communique issued in Damascus, two Israeli warplanes tried to cross into Syrian airspace after flying over Lebanon, but were confronted by Syrian jet fighters. The Israeli fighters withdrew.

An Israeli military spokesperson, however, said that two Syrian Mig-23 fighters were downed after a dog fight in Lebanese airspace. Both Syria and Israel traded warnings over future incidents. During the past few weeks, Israel has been constantly accusing Syria of preparing for a confrontation with Israel.

Meanwhile, in south Lebanon national resistance forces continued to launch attacks against Israeli and South Lebanese targets inside the so-called 'security zone'. The most severe attack was directed at the Israeli military headquarters in the Hasbia region in the eastern 'security belt' November 16. Lebanese commandos from the National Resistance Front used rockets against the Israeli-occupied building, causing some damage to it. Rockets also reportedly hit the headquarters of the Israeli-supported South Lebanese Army in the same area.

Two explosive devices were also discovered no more than 800 meters from the SLA military headquarters. The SLA positions in the same area were also attacked the following day with rockets and machine guns. Targets were hit accurately reports indicated, but failed to give details. The SLA responded with fierce bombardment at Tyre area villages and al-Rashidiya refugee camp near Tyre.

Israel Radio also reported last week that eight Katyusha rockets were dismantled from the 'security belt'. The rockets were aimed at Galilee settlements.

BZU Detainee Held in Isolation

The Israeli director of Ramallah Prison has yet to explain why they are confining administrative detainee Samir Sbeihat in isolation, lawyer Jawad Boulus reported November 18.

Sbeihat, a former student council head at Bir Zeit University, has been held in isolation from the rest of the administrative detainees for nearly one month. Most administrative detainees are now held at Beer Sheba Prison.

Boulus who visited the Ramallah Prison on November 18 said after visiting his client in his cell that he tried to meet the prison director, but the latter refused. Sbeihat reportedly has been denied the right to receive newspapers or to have family visits.

In Gaza, the Israeli authorities handed Bir Zeit University student Walid Zaqout an order November 18 barring him from travelling to the West Bank. Zaqout previously served a six-month town arrest order allegedly for political activities.

In other related news, an Israeli military appeals committee reduced the administrative detention orders against three West Bank residents who were confined for six months each. The three men are Jabril Jahshan, a student at Bir Zeit University; Abdallah Saba al-Houdali from Beit Sahur near Bethlehem; and Sami Yunis Shahin. The three men are expected to be released in the near future.

Earlier on November 14, the same committee reduced by half the administrative detention of Daoud Shusheh of Husan village in the Bethlehem district. The court also turned down appeals by two other administrative detainees.

Peres Allows Washington to Softens its PLO Position

Briefing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on November 18, Shimon Peres said that Israel had given the US permission to "soften" its position on PLO participation in Middle East peace negotiations.

US State Department officials however denied November 19 that the US had softened its position toward the PLO and that the longstanding American conditions for the inclusion of the PLO in peace talks remains the same — including the demand that the PLO recognize Israel's right to exist.

US conditions for PLO participation in peace talks are now: 1) PLO recognition of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338; 2) cessation of military operations; and 3) PLO agreement to enter into direct negotiations with Israel. Up to now, the United States has demanded that the PLO recognize *Israel's right to exist*, hence the third condition, substituting the demand for recognition with PLO agreement to enter into direct negotiations constitutes a policy change. Peres told the committee that Israel does not need PLO recognition. It's a humiliating condition, he said, and for that reason Israel gave Washington the green light for the change.

All the same, Israel has never agreed to the US formula for PLO participation in peace talks, neither in the past when Washington demanded recognition of Israel's right to exist, nor at present. Peres stressed this point, saying that Israel was not adopting the American policy toward the PLO but was merely agreeing not to object to it.

Jamal Nasser, 1985 AAUG convention chairman; Hani Faris, AAUG president; and AAUG board members, Janet Akulian and Samir Nakib

AAUG Conference Affirms Palestinian Rights

Social and economic development in the Arab world, in addition to the question of Palestine, dominated discussions at the annual conference of Arab-American University Graduates in Chicago, Illinois, November 7-10.

During the 13 forums and in speeches throughout the four-day gathering, participants analyzed in detail the social and economic options open to individual Arab states and frequently expressed a call for new pan-Arab leadership.

However, the dominant tone of the three-day convention was articulated at the gala banquet. The issue that was uppermost in the minds of most of those who attended — the Palestinians — provided a recurring theme and a unifying rallying point for the 600 people who gathered at this closing event.

The assemblage was greeted on behalf of Mayor Harold Washington by Alderman Clifford Kelly, one of the 50 members of the City Council that governs Chicago. Both Mayor Washington and Alderman Kelly represent a small but widening confluence of American blacks. Alderman Kelly, who has visited Arab countries and the West Bank several times, described himself as a lifelong friend of the Arabs.

"The continued occupation of Palestine by the Israelis," Alderman Kelly said, "translates to the oppression of the Palestinians. We need justice, fairness and human rights on the West Bank."

The Palestinians were also uppermost in the mind of Ambassador Clovis Maksoud, permanent observer to the United Nations and chief representative to the United States for the League of Arab States. "This is a moment," Maksoud said, "when Palestinian nationalism should be reaffirmed to provide the unity that the Zionists are trying to destroy. Let there be self-criticism, but not self-destructiveness... the enemies of the Palestinians and the Arabs are waiting for a hemorrhage of our will." He added, "We are not moderate Palestinians or radical Palestinians. We are insistent upon our rights. If they are forthcoming, we are moderate. If they are not forthcoming, we are fighters and radicals."

This identification of all Arabs with the Palestinians was emphasized by Lakhdar Ibrahimi, assistant secretary-general for information for the League of Arab States. Although he is from Tunis, Ibrahimi said, "I consider myself to be a Palestinian, as do my wife and children. All people who are interested in justice are, in a sense, Palestinians."

A scholarly paper was delivered by Abd al-Latif al-Hamad, director-general of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

Al-Hamad gave a wide-ranging analysis of the economic problems and potential for the Arab world for the next 15 years. He described the 1973-74 increase in oil prices as a turning point that will not be repeated. He said that oil income in the oil-producing countries will begin to increase substantially. "The 70s only unleashed our potential," he concluded. "The real thing will take place in the 90s."

Other sessions dealt with building bridges between Afro-Americans and Arab Americans, human conditions in Israeli-occupied territories, countering Zionist activities in the United States and Canada and the search for a peace settlement between Israel and Arab countries, art and architecture in the Arab world, the Iraq-Iran war, the role of Arab youth in North America, and Arab national interests in economic development.

A strong theme of the many seminars and sessions was the assertion on the part of both Arabs and non-Arabs of the need for greater Arab unity and pan-Arab leadership. "We talk about unity," an Egyptian delegate said at a reception, "and we give lip-service to the need for leadership. But now we need to act upon it. If we do not, we will forever be a divided and vulnerable association against unified opponents."

The association also announced a number of citations, among them one to Alex Odeh, West Coast coordinator of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who was killed when a bomb went off in his office. Odeh was described as a poet, a soft-spoken builder of bridges between communities and a loving husband and father.

Israeli Land Office Targets Galilee Farms

Palestinian farmers in the Galilee rose up against increased Israeli attempts to confiscate fertile land this week.

In Ayloot village near Nazareth, nine villagers were arrested when they clashed with Israeli authorities over an attempt to confiscate village land. According to an *Al Ittihad* report, villagers stood firm against Israeli bulldozers attempting to work lands west of the village November 17. Accompanying the bulldozers were Israeli police and border guard units.

Al Ittihad reported that the Israeli land department officials who were on the scene told the villagers that they were in possession of certificates proving the land was 'state-owned'. The officials failed to present the certificates upon request of the police commander, claiming they were not obliged to do so. They then, according to the report, gave orders to their men to start working. This action was opposed by the villagers and tension mounted nearly to the point of a clash.

Al Ittihad's report continued that the police commander interfered suggesting that the village *mukhtar* and other dignitaries and land officials go to the police station and discuss a solution to the conflict. However when the nine villagers went to the police station they were arrested and continue to be held in police custody. Since then, *Al Ittihad* reports, tension is high in Ayloot and a strike was declared in the village schools in protest of the confiscation and villagers' arrest.

Some 20,000 dunums of the village land have been confiscated since the creation of Israel, thus blocking the village's expansion from three directions. The village is now left with only 5000 dunums of land which are now subjected to the threat of confiscation.

Mul Land

In the three villages of Batuf, Arraba, Sakhnin, and Deir Hana, thousands of dunums of Arab land — categorized by the Israeli army as "Number 9" and known as *Mul* land — are now another target of confiscation. The army began to cordon off the area last week to prevent farmers from cultivating it. The Hebrew press reported that the Israeli military authorities have deemed the area necessary for military use and have confiscated parts of it for live ammunition maneuvers. Israel Radio reported November 17 that the area slated for confiscation amounts to more than 1500 dunums.

The *Mul* area was also the target of the Israeli army a few months ago when army tanks entered it, uprooting hundreds of olive trees and destroying crops. This action led to protests by the Sakhnin local council. The farmers then replanted olive trees on the land.

The area was also the main cause of the massive 1976 Land Day demonstration which led to the death of six Palestinians. This also led to the annual celebration of Land Day on March 30. Shortly before the 1976 demonstration, the army had closed off the area for military maneuvers.

Heads of the three village councils held an extraordinary session in Sakhnin November 19 to discuss the new Israeli measures and the best way to face the confiscation. A decision was made to call representatives of the Regional Committee of the Arab Local Council Heads for a meeting in a few days with the Committee for the Defense of Land and the Arab members of Knesset. Cables of protest were also sent to various official departments.

The situation in the three villages was also reported to be tense. Israeli border guards were sent to Sakhnin on November 18 in anticipation of popular protest.

The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality was also reported to have submitted an urgent request to the Israeli Knesset to discuss the confiscation which the DFPE described as another attack on the rights of the inhabitants of the three villages.

The Naqab in the south was also the scene of similar attacks. November 17 the 'Green Patrols' and a large police force attacked the tribe of Tarabin in an attempt to force them off their land. Men and women of the tribe stood up to the patrols and in one case *Al Ittihad* reported, one of the 'Green Patrols' threatened a woman carrying her baby by aiming his pistol at her head.

There was also an attempt made by land department officials to force families of the Azazmeh tribe off their land. The landowners who hurried to the Beer Sheba court were able to get an order *nisi* forbidding any action against them until the case is discussed by the court.

Jews Protest Mormon Presence

Thousands of Jews demonstrated November 14 against the building of a Mormon Middle East studies center undergoing construction on the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. Demonstrators demanded the center be closed or turned into a Jewish religious school.

The Orthodox Jewish community has been leading a vigorous campaign for several months now to stop construction on the multi-million dollar extension of Brigham Young University. They claim the Mormon center will be used to proselytize Jews.

Demonstrators speaking from the Hebrew University campus on Mount Scopus directly across from the Mormon center revealed a memo sent by the head of the Mormon Church in Israel, David Galbraith, to one of the church elders acknowledging that the center "could serve as a great missionary tool" in Israel. The demonstrators, representing a mixed group of orthodox and secular Jews, used this memo to support their claim against the center.

Galbraith, in an interview with *The Jerusalem Post* November 15, admitted sending the memo in 1977 but said that he had done so "before we realized that we weren't welcome here with any kind of missionary activity." The Mormon Church later made a written pledge to the Israeli Interior Ministry that it would not proselytize Jews. The West Jerusalem Israeli municipality as a result agreed to allow the church to proceed with building the center.

The demonstrators, most of whom were American Jews, carried signs calling on Mormons to "go home". Another sign read "The only place in Israel for Salt Lake City is Sodom." Another said "There is no room for missionaries in Eretz Israel."

The demonstrators were protected by scores of Israeli police and border guards. They used loudspeakers which could be heard throughout the Arab areas of the Mount of Olives and nearby neighborhoods. Most of the speakers spoke in English, with one in particular shouting, "We cannot forgive or forget. Leave us alone. Let us be free to fulfill our destiny as Jews."

Oddly enough, the Mormons are among Israel's strongest supporters in the US. The church has already contributed millions of dollars in aid to Israeli projects. Brigham Young students have been taking courses in Israel for many years now in an Israeli kibbutz just south of Jerusalem. That center set the nucleus for building the Mount of Olives campus. The Mormon Church of the Latter Day Saints also has a worship house in the Sheikh Jarrah area of East Jerusalem where they hold prayer services every Saturday.

Vocal Jewish opposition to Mormon presence in Israel, however, did not begin until after plans were revealed and construction began on the Brigham Young Middle East Studies Center. At one point early last July, vandals smashed windows at the Mormon Sheikh Jarrah meeting house and left a garden hose running through the hole, flooding the building.

Representatives of Christian denominations here in Jerusalem have also protested against the Mormon Center and in particularly against what they believe is preferential treatment accorded the Mormons by the West Jerusalem municipality. They held a news conference in July attacking the municipality's hasty decision to give the Mormon Church a license to build the center, which is going up on confiscated Palestinian land. They cited the example of the Baptists, here for more than 60 years, who have not been allowed to rebuild their church in Jerusalem after vandals torched it in 1982.

The Dawn
AL FAJR
AL FAJR — Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly

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Al Fajr was founded in 1972 by Yusef Nasr, who edited the paper until his kidnapping in 1974. The English edition was first published in April 1980. **The Dawn (Al Fajr) Jerusalem Palestinian Weekly (UPS 686630)** is published weekly for $50.00 per year by Paul Ajlouny, 16 Crowell St., Hempstead. N.Y. 11550. Second class postage paid at Hempstead, N.Y.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Al Fajr 2025 I Street, N.W., Suite 925, Washington D.C., 20006.

'Let Our People Go' in Palestine

'Let my people go' was the cry of Israeli and Jewish groups around the world this week as all eyes focused on the superpower summit in Geneva. A well-orchestrated plea for the emigration of Soviet Jews and better treatment of Soviet dissidents found its way into world newspapers and onto international television screens throughout the week.

Here in the 'Holy Land' the cries for Soviet Jewry took on a special meaning. Israeli high school students were marched through the streets of major Israeli cities in a call for the 'release' of Soviet Jews. A Soviet Jewry demonstration was even organized at Rachel's Tomb in the occupied city of Bethlehem despite the fact that demonstrations are banned in the Israeli occupied territories.

Israel's Knesset dedicated a special session to the plight of Soviet Jews which was attended by the Israeli President Chaim Herzog and the Prime Minister Shimon Peres. This was only days after the same parliamentary chamber had echoed with the racist remarks of Kach leader Meir Kahane who while advocating increased Jewish immigration — whether Soviet or otherwise — also called for the expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from 'Eretz Israel'.

For Palestinians Israeli and US defense of human rights has a hollow ring. The 21 Palestinians deported since May, the four more now awaiting expulsion and the more than two million refugees not allowed the right to return find the Israeli and US position hopelessly hypocritical. On the subject of human rights, those of us suffering under 18 years of Israeli military occupation could write a book.

We Palestinians want our situation addressed, too. If the freedom of movement, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly in Washington or grassroots America is to be held up as an example and thrown in the face of the Soviets' Gorbachev, let him toss back the denial of such freedoms in Israeli-occupied Ramallah, for example, and see how Reagan and his aides wince.

If military aggression is to be denounced, then let it be denounced everywhere, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza. World leaders must bring themselves to the point of honest reckoning. Let freedom ring — as they say — everywhere — in Washington, Moscow and Palestine. This is the formula which will bring about a lasting and comprehensive world peace.

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Why Hussein Won't Enter Peace Talks Alone

by Maher Abukhater

There are several reasons why King Hussein of Jordan will not fall for the Israeli-US trap to draw him into unilateral and direct negotiations with Israel.

King Hussein knows that the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip are not the Sinai. When the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat made his unexpected flight to Israel in 1977, he must have had a great deal of confidence concerning his chances of regaining all the Sinai. At that time the existing situation was indeed favorable to Sadat.

First, only several hundred Israeli settlers were in the Sinai. Therefore it was easy to remove them and dismantle the settlements. Second, the ruling party in Israel was the right-wing Likud which meant that a settlement with Egypt would not have found much opposition from the other largest group, the Labor Party. Third, a Democrat was in office in the White House whose worldview was not as conservative as would have been a Republican. Fourth, conservative oil-producing Arab countries had some leverage over the course of world politics.

All these factors worked to assist Sadat in 'convincing' the Israelis to withdraw from the Sinai. But, the major factor in the Israeli withdrawal was the gains Israel made from neutralizing Egypt and making the Sinai a weapon-free buffer zone.

This vast land, the Sinai, empty of people, free from any heavy artillery or armies would make recurrence of war between Egypt and Israel almost impossible. If Egypt wanted to attack Israel, Israeli leaders must have calculated when they agreed to give up the Sinai, it would take the Egyptian army hours before it could cross the Sinai and reach Israeli borders. By that time the army's movements would have been detected by the early warning system set up in the Sinai by the Americans and Israel would have destroyed this army while still in the desert.

The West Bank and Gaza are a totally different story. It is estimated that there are more than 100,000 Jewish settlers in the occupied territories, more than half of them living in the Jerusalem area settlements alone. These settlers are already banging the drums of civil war if their government agrees to return parts of the West Bank and Gaza to Arab rule.

It will be a nearly impossible task to remove all, if any, of these settlers who are well trained, heavily armed and ideologically motivated. Knowing this, the Israeli government will insist, in case of any peace talks with the Arabs, on keeping all the areas where settlements are located. This means more than 25 percent of the most strategic and fertile Palestinian land. It also means fanatic settlers will remain in the midst of Palestinian neighborhoods possibly the cause of constant friction.

The current Israeli government is a fragile coalition of Labor and Likud but under the premiership of a Labor minister. This means that opposition from within the government to any plan by the prime minister is bound to defeat that plan and bring down the government along with it. The Likud members of the coalition government have more than once expressed unwielding opposition to any withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. They have left no doubt in anyone's mind that they would make life miserable for any Israeli official who would even dare talk about withdrawal.

The Likud members do not have the affection for the Jordanian monarch their Labor partners in the government have. So when the premiership changes hands to a Likud minister in less than one year, according to their national unity agreement, talks about giving up the West Bank and Gaza territory, no matter how small the territory may be, will most probably cease. Less than one year is a very short time for Jordan to expect any concrete delivery from the Labor prime minister. So if King Hussein was to take the risk of entering into direct talks alone with Israel he would need to come out with a substantial gain in order to legitimize his move and win public support.

Even if Jordan was able to win a good amount of concessions from the Labor prime minister in this short year, the Israeli premier would need parliamentary ratification of any agreement to implement it. The Israeli government system is totally different from its neighboring Arab countries. In the Arab countries, the president or monarch can make a lone decision that will be binding for the whole country. In Israel, the premier will have to win a parliamentary majority to ratify any agreement. It is doubtful that Labor could muster enough votes in the parliament to pass an agreement in which West Bank and Gaza land would be returned to Jordan.

It is anyhow premature to talk about even a Labor prime minister being willing to return a substantial area of the occupied territories to Jordan. All signs indicate that Israel is not ready to give up much of the West Bank and Gaza. Settlements are still either being constructed or enlarged. The West Bank and Gaza cities are further linked to the Israeli infrastructure — in economics, in communication and in other vital areas.

The White House is presently occupied by a super conservative Republican leader who cannot see the world other than in terms of black and white. For that leader, Israel is an important strategic ally in his battle for world supremacy against the Soviet Union. Therefore he is not willing to anger Israel by putting pressure on it to withdraw from the occupied territories in order to please unstable and weak Arab regimes. The American administration, anyhow, has not yet shown any signs to Jordan that it would back Jordanian demands if the king really entered direct talks with Israel.

Besides, there is hardly any Arab pressure on the US to force it to lean on Israel even a little. The oil factor is completely out of the picture now and the oil-rich Arab countries are actually at the mercy of the US as they foolishly allowed their economy and wealth to be taken hostage by American banks. The Arabs must not have learned from the Iranian experiment that the US government can freeze all their assets in the US, thus completely crippling them.

All these are critical factors which the Jordanian king will consider before embarking on any peace adventure alone. But this is not all. There is still the Palestinian factor which is as important as the Israeli one.

The more than 1.5 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza have had it up to here with being governed by a non-Palestinian body. They are now anxious to try a government of their own. Even though getting a Palestinian state is more cumbersome than either returning the occupied territories to Jordanian rule or even creating an autonomy, the Palestinians, nevertheless, are willing to wait until they get what they want, or nothing at all.

Continued on page 13

Jericho Refugees Caught in Israel - UNRWA Trap

by Jawdat Mana'a

Palestinian refugees especially those in the Jericho area camps found themselves last week caught between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand, they are the daily victims of Israeli acts of repression against them and their camps. On the other hand, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is also in collusion with the Israelis in approving their plans which are in violation of international law.

On the Israeli side, Palestinians still vividly remember the plans suggested by Israeli cabinet minister Mordechai Ben Porat back in 1983. Ben Porat, a minister-without-portfolio, devised a plan that called for the resettlement of nearly 350,000 Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes back in 1948. These Palestinians who had taken temporary refuge in some 20 camps in the West Bank did not want an equally temporary solution but were and still are waiting for a just solution to the Palestinian problem.

At the time that Ben Porat was boasting about his plan which he said would improve' the living conditions of the refugees, other actions were being taken against the refugees and the existing camps. The Israeli actions included the blocking — by reinforced concrete — of the entrances of the camps, the closure of the youth centers and the increase in repressive acts like curfews, mass arrests and arbitrary break-ins. Ben Porat's plan included as its top priority the initial removal of the Jericho area refugee camps. It called for the removal of al-Nu'emeh, Aqbat Jaber and Ain al-Sultan camps. The refugees living there were to be transferred to housing complexes built by Israel with outside support.

At that time, Palestinian refugees declared their rejection of the resettlement scheme and pointed out that the solution to the refugee problem could be found only through a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem. The refugees indicated their desire for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and not luxury homes without their national rights.

Israel's claims that they wanted to improve the health situation of the refugees were then and still are a mere mask to cover up their real political intentions aimed at liquidating the Palestinian problem and its most clear symbol — the refugees and the camps. Israel's lack of concern for the refugees' health conditions can be clearly seen when we review the situation in the Dheisheh camp. The camp has been suffering for many years from the continued presence of an Israel quarry right next to it. The Israeli authorities have yet to close the hazardous quarry despite repeated complaints and a civil court decision calling for the removal of the Israeli quarry which constitutes a lung hazard for the more than 10,000 refugees who live within a few hundred meters of the quarry.

UNRWA officials, for their part have to a large extent been oblivious to the problems of the refugees. The United Nations organization is not only entrusted with providing services to the refugees but is also obliged to provide an atmosphere of comfort for the refugees until their problem is solved.

For the few thousand refugees who have remained in the Jericho area camps, the anxiety of a questionable future is on everybody's mind. For them, the reason for this anxiety is UNRWA's permission to Israeli authorities to demolish the camps. Palestinian refugee fears are further exacerbated by the fact that UNRWA's permission gave the Israelis legitimacy to change the order in the camps in violation of international law. The Geneva Convention states clearly that an occupying power does not have the right to make any changes in occupied territory. In this context, the official approval by UNRWA of the demolition plan means the UN agency contradicted its basic provision which is to ensure that international laws are not violated — if not by others, at least not by itself.

The past events should again cause us to remember the Palestinian refugees and to redouble efforts to find a just solution to their problem. World governments and international organizations should work hand-in-hand to force Israel to recognize the Palestinians' national rights and find a solution to the Palestinian problem. This would automatically solve the problem of the refugees whose crisis is the core of the Palestinian tragedy. ■

Jawdat Mana'a is the director of the Bethlehem Press Office and a resident of the Dheisheh refugee camp

Let Hussein Talk For PLO

To the editor:

As a friend of the Palestinian people and a supporter of their just demands for independent nationhood, I have been trying to absorb much information about their present unfortunate conditions as well as the possibilities for achieving improvements and eventually their reaching the desired goals.

Regrettably, the situation at present doesn't look too promising, yet while there is life there is hope. The idea of having a joint delegation of Jordanians and Palestinians meet representatives of Israel and the United States to arrange for Palestinian independence is another tragic mistake in the history of Palestine. (The first one was the refusal by Palestinian leaders to accept nationhood when the United Nations first offered it to them.) A joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation may be internationally interpreted that the PLO has forfeited all claims to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people. There are indications that the unhappy fratricidal split of Palestinian factions may yet be widened. In addition there are no indications of any incentive for either Israel or the US to make any concessions to such a joint delegation.

Israel believes that with increased brutality "the Arabs" can be held in check and since the other major Arab governments are not really objecting to the Palestinian-Israeli conditions and are maintaining "normal" trade with both Israel and the US, the United States also has no reason to alter their support for Israel.

There appears, however, another possibility which has not yet been mentioned publicly. Jordan, fortunately, seems to be again a good friend of the Palestinians with whom it should be possible to come to an agreement. So why can't the king of Jordan who has lost the West Bank territory to Israeli occupation now request a peace treaty with Israel and the return of all the lost land, including the East Jerusalem area which used to be under Jordanian control?

This would avoid the embarrassing situation where Israel could decide to accept or reject any Palestinians on a joint delegation and where Palestinians may have to agree to possible concessions. After the return of these territories the PLO may in a brotherly fashion discuss the transfer of Palestinian land to Palestinian sovereignty, hopefully under Jordanian protection. There is hope that such a solution would be more acceptable to the US and therefore perhaps also to Israel, avoiding any unpleasant confrontations.

The fact that King Hussein and Mr. Arafat have agreed on a joint delegation should not be an obstacle. Either of them may surely reconsider and propose a better approach if that seems to be more promising.

It is true that this solution is — for the moment — leaving out the Gaza territory which was under Egyptian rule. However, it may be most important to free the West Bank as soon as possible and a solution for the Gaza Strip will be possible to be found later, perhaps with Egyptian cooperation.

Felix Spielman
New Jersey
USA

'Shame On You'

To the editor:

I have been reading your newspaper recently with growing trepidation. Over the past few months (perhaps as long as a year) it has clearly been going downhill with regards to the quality of the content, the ability of people you choose to publish and the breadth of coverage of events in the occupied territories.

Signs of this decay have included: the increasing use of the term "Arabs" when you mean Palestinians; the incredible phenomenon of your journalists quoting as the only source for stories official Israeli spokespeople; the adoption of Israeli terminology such as 'security offenses'. You have also, I note, taken to giving space to pro-Israeli Palestinians (should I say Arabs?) such as members of Knesset for Zionist parties — again not as one among many people being interviewed on a subject, but whole columns of space for them to spew out their ridiculous views.

The low point, and the reason I'm writing, was reached in the edition of October 25, 1985. There you for the first time, as far as I'm aware, used the term 'Judea' as a descriptive term for part of the West Bank in an article on press censorship. Shame on you! Can we expect the masthead to soon change to *'Al Fajr* — Palestinian Weekly. The Only English Language Newspaper in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District.'

It is with sorrow that I point out to you that those of us who could once rely on *Al Fajr* as our only or main source of news from the area (the name for which you have now shed doubt on) now have to go to other more disparate sources because *Al Fajr* no longer covers all the news we need (the recent events at BZU being a case in point).

We in Europe are not privy to the reasons for your recent change of policy. I note that there has been an acrimonious change of editor (I salute your courage for reporting that event) and the recent appearance of several new names among the by-lined *Al Fajr* staff — is this the reason?

Sloppiness over terminology, lack of accuracy in geography and self-censorship are all signs of a deteriorating situation in *Al Fajr*. I hope, even if you don't have the courage to print this letter, you will take its sentiments to heart and fight to return to the standards of a few years ago.

Please publish a complete list of administrative detainees and their professions. Expand the weekly review — even if the rest of the paper declines these sort of things will keep your readership loyal.

Peter Pettigrew
Polytechnic of Central London

Editor's note:

We have not changed our basic editorial policy at all. Al Fajr's policy since our inception has been to reflect the national Palestinian position. If we have changed at all, it has been in broadening our coverage in order that we can reflect the entire spectrum of Palestinian society. Regarding our news, we have had only a minor change in staff and we have been giving special attention to improving their journalistic skills in order to reach a wider audience. Our aim is that all our reports should be balanced and credible. In order to do that we feel it is important to report on the official Israeli position. This, however, has never meant that we base our stories on Israeli spokespersons or Israeli propaganda. The only exception to that would be if this is the only way to cover a story due to censorship restrictions. As to the use of 'Judea,' this was quoted in a Hebrew translation which we prefaced by an introduction explaining to our readers that it was a translation. In the case of translations, we are obliged to present an exact rendering without any changes. Your assertion that we carry out self-censorship or that we no longer cover all the news is untrue. The BZU event which you seem to have missed was covered on two entire pages in our June 14, '85 issue, No. 267. ■

When Egyptian President Husni Mubarak told reporters that four Palestinians who hijacked an Italian ship, the *Achille Lauro*, had left Egypt after they surrendered to PLO officials, US officials and media hurried to call him a liar when it was discovered that the Palestinians were still in Egypt. But the same officials and media kept mute when it was uncovered that US President Ronald Reagan's announcement that the interception of the Egyptian plane carrying the four hijackers out of Egypt was done in "close coordination" with the Italian government was also a big lie.

Reagan's lie was evident less than a week after the interception of the plane when the Italian government resigned because of internal differences over the handling of the affair and its aftermath. It was found out that the Italian government was actually caught by surprise by the unorthodox American action. The Italians were as upset by the American air piracy as many world countries who saw it as an act of defiance of international laws and norms and as an attempt by the US to act as the world's policeman.

Reagan, who personally ordered the American jet fighters to intercept the civilian Egyptian plane, actually showed political immaturity when he miscalculated Italy's good relations with the Palestinians and the rest of the Arab countries. He believed that he could intercept the plane, take it to an American military base in Italy and be praised for this action by the Italian government whom he thought would play according to his game plan.

But, to his surprise, even though Italy was a US ally and a NATO member, Reagan found out that Italy was not a banana republic running in the US sphere of influence. Italy, he found out, was a country with a mind of its own.

Italian Socialists

The Italian government is currently led by the Socialist Party which was elected to office in June 1983. Prime Minister Bettino Craxi has become the first Socialist leader to run Italy. It was the Christian Democrats who ruled the country since the fall of fascist Italy after World War II until the Socialists took it over. Craxi's coalition government includes four other parties. They are the Christian Democrats, Republicans, Social Democrats and Liberals.

Craxi, and the Socialist Party in general, have been outspoken supporters of Palestinian rights. One recent such expression of support came immediately after Israel bombed the PLO headquarters in Tunis October 1. The Italian government strongly condemned the air raid. Reagan should have guessed from that condemnation that Italy would not applaud his riding roughshod over the Egyptian plane and its Palestinian passengers.

Indeed, though some observers expected Italy to back away a bit from their pro-Palestinian position after the *Achille Lauro*, the opposite was the case. One would have also expected that Prime Minister Craxi would have toned down his pro-PLO stance as he tried in the first week of November to win a parliamentary vote-of-confidence necessary for his resurrected cabinet to stay in office. But, to the surprise of friends and foes alike, at home and outside, Craxi came out stronger than before in support of Palestinian legitimate rights.

"The Palestinians exist and have the right to a homeland," Craxi told his parliament on November 6. "Israel must return the territories it has occupied for 18 years," he added.

Craxi went on to express support for the PLO armed struggle as a means to liberate the occupied territories, even though he expressed some reservations about the outcome of this kind of warfare. "I contest the direction of the armed struggle not because the PLO does not have the legitimate right to it, but because armed struggle will not bring a solution when it creates innocent victims. However, I don't contest the legitimacy of armed struggle," Craxi said. "To contest the right of a movement wanting to liberate its own country from foreign occupation to resort to arms means to go against the laws of history," the Italian Socialist minister said.

It was Craxi's sole decision which freed Palestinian commando leader Muhammad Abbas (Abu al-Abbas) of the Palestine Liberation Front, who happened to be on the Egyptian plane which was diverted to Italy. The release of Abu al-Abbas, against strong American objection, was the cause behind the resignation of Craxi's cabinet. The pro-US Defense Minister, Giovanni Spadolini, from the Republican Party, withdrew from the cabinet in protest against Craxi's unilateral decision. His withdrawal forced Craxi to submit a resignation to Italian President Francesco Cossiga.

Craxi, feeling strong support from the Italian people for his daring challenge to the American government, was able to convince his coalition members, especially the hard-line Republicans, of the futility of their positions as robots of the United States. Feeling the crunch of American policy, which is unpopular in Italy, the Republicans agreed to return to the cabinet and thus averted its collapse.

The resurrection of the cabinet was an obvious victory for Craxi and his Socialist Party policy towards the Middle East issue, particularly the Palestinian problem. This gave Craxi the confidence to vocally express, and only three days before parliament was supposed to cast its vote-of-confidence on the cabinet, his strong support of the PLO's right to armed struggle. It was as if Craxi was challenging the US and Israel as well as his other Western allies.

Italy-Arab Trade

Italy has for years maintained good trade relations with the Arab world. Italian imports and exports from these countries have reached billions of Italian lire. Its major trade commercial centers are found in Saudi Arabia (over 4 billion Italian lire in 1984), Libya (close to 3 billion lire), Egypt (1.5 billion), Algeria (1.35 billion), and Iraq and the United Arab Emirates (each about 1 billion lire in exports). Italian imports from these countries were even higher with the exception of Saudia Arabia and UAE which were slightly less.

In comparison to this huge trade exchange between Italy and the Arab world, trade relations between the Western European nation and Israel are almost negligible. Italian exports to Israel in 1984 registered a little less than 632 million Italian lire while its imports reached only 395 million.

Italy relies heavily on Arab produced crude oil. This constitutes the major part of its imports from the Arab world. In return, the Arab countries import Italian furniture, leather products, artistic material, cars and several other products. Here in the West Bank, Italian products range from children's pacifiers and toys all the way to refrigerators and washing machines.

According to one local importer of Italian appliances, demand for Italian goods is high because of their low cost in comparison to other Western European or American goods. This is attributed to the low value of the Italian lire which makes buying Italian goods cheaper.

This special trade relationship between Italy and the Arab world naturally has an impact on bilateral political relationships. But still the Socialists' ideological beliefs determine to a certain extent their party's international relations. According to Italian sources here, when Craxi made his pro-PLO statement at the parliament, he was not thinking of trade relationships. It was Craxi's, and the Socialist Party's for that matter, sincere belief in the Palestinians' just cause and right to liberate their land which led him to make these statements, according to the source. Craxi actually departed from his prepared text when he brought out the issue of the PLO's right to armed struggle.

Italian-Palestinian relations are expected to grow even further in light of Craxi's triumphant return to office. This is expected in spite of the *Achille Lauro* affair and the Italian holding of the four Palestinian hijackers. As a member of the European Economic Community and NATO, Italy will be expected to play an even larger role in getting Western Europe to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination and independence. ■

la Repubblica

SCOTCH WHISKY

SCOTCH WHISKY

Tumulti alla Camera per la replica del presidente del Consiglio, poi un voto obbligato

"Arafat come Mazzini"

Craxi ottiene la fiducia, ma il pentapartito si disgrega

Dalle proteste del Pri agli applausi comunisti

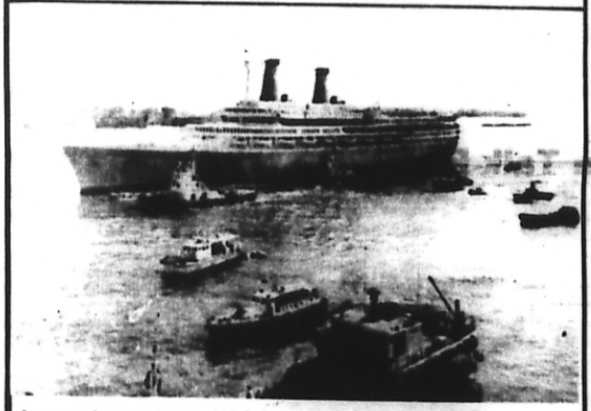
Che sfilata, ragazzi...

La pietra tombale sull'alleanza a 5

The Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*, the center of Italian government controversy. Craxi and his socialists survived intact.

Palestinians Find Friends in Craxi's Italian Socialists

by Maher Abukhater
Al Fajr Diplomatic Correspondent



A copy of *La Repubblica*, Italy's largest daily, with a front page story on PLO-Italian relations.

"TO CONTEST THE RIGHT OF A MOVEMENT WANTING TO LIBERATE ITS OWN COUNTRY FROM FOREIGN OCCUPATION TO RESORT TO ARMS MEANS TO GO AGAINST THE LAWS OF HISTORY."

Bettino Craxi

'Fighting Ghosts' in Bidya:

Lawyer, Landowners Point to Official Hand Behind Land Deed Forgery

by Khalil Touma

Old Um-Misbah, the wife of the late Ibrahim al-Aqra from the village of Bidya near Nablus, still remembers that tragic day of May 2, 1983. Her husband, now a symbol of the steadfast Palestinian farmer, was shot dead by Israeli border police as he tried to defend his land, an event which made the front pages of many local papers back then.

"That day," she says when asked to recall the event, "all the villagers hurried to their land plots to stop Israeli bulldozers from working on their land." It seems the land had been fraudulently sold to an Israeli land company which meant to build a new settlement. When the manager of the Elkana Settlement-based Gal Development Company showed up, Ibrahim hurried toward him shouting 'Who sold you my land? Get off of it.' The manager then requested the help of the authorities and a group of border police came immediately and beat up Ibrahim.

As a result of the beating, Ibrahim fell unconscious for nearly one hour. When he regained consciousness with the help of the farmers who gathered around and showered him with water, he got up on his shaky legs and tried to force the intruders off his land. But the Israeli border police fired on the unarmed farmers, killing Ibrahim and injuring two others. The border police arrested everyone in sight and slapped a curfew on the village. Um-Misbah and the other women were detained for three days and most of their men spent nearly a month in jail for allegedly attacking the border police. While in jail, they report they were subjected to threats and various temptations to force them to sell their land, but none relented.

Al Fajr, which reported the murder of al-Aqra on the front page at the time, reported in the story that less than two months before the killing, the land-owners had obtained an order *nisi* from the Nablus Magistrate Court prohibiting all settlement work on the land. This order was to be in effect until the court ruled on the question of legitimate ownership. The settlers ignored the court order and the police inaction was seen as encouragement for the settlers to continue working.

Al-Aqra's fatal stance served to bolster the morale of Palestinian farmers waging a life or death battle over their land. It also sent apparent shivers down the spine of some Israeli government officials who were sent scurrying for a way to minimize the damage and to cover up what was later seen as government complicity in the illegal transfer of Arab land to Israeli companies.

Many questions were asked at the time: Why didn't the police interfere to enforce the court's order *nisi*? Why did the border police behave as if they were employed by the Israeli company even to the point of shooting the landowners? If the case was a civil one why didn't the police treat both sides equally? Why were the victims — the landowners — arrested? Why have the killers still not been brought to trial?

It was more than two years later in July of this year when cases of fraudulent land deals and forged documents of sale began to leak to the Israeli press. Everyone began to remember Ibrahim al-Aqra and his accusation of illegal sale once again.

Letting the Cat Out of the Bag

In late July, the police arrested three Israelis — Avraham Salim, Michael Oren and Yehoshua Misrahi — on suspicion of involvement in a counterfeit dollar ring. Misrahi was formerly the military governor of Tulkarm. Oren was a high-ranking police officer also in Tulkarm, and Salim was a land dealer. A subsequent police search of their homes, however, uncovered hundreds of documents including power of attorney statements, land registrar deeds and receipts. The land deeds were blank except for signatures at the bottom. Police immediately suspected the signatures were forgeries, and the cat was out of the bag.

Upon their arrest, the three Israelis claimed they were working on behalf of top government officials and that they knew enough "to bring down the government." Their advocate told the press that the three were just "small fry" in a larger sea. "The whole affair is a bundle of political dynamite," he said.

Despite the air fanning by the authorities about irregularities and illegalities in the purchase of some land from Palestinians and despite the arrest of a few persons among whom were leading *simsars* (Arab or Israeli land dealers who buy and sell Arab land to the Israelis) the topic seems to have once again gone underground. Most of those detained were later released without any concrete punitive action against them. This has led some observers to charge that the whole incident was created to serve certain party interests in the Israeli coalition government.

But another incident, once again in the village of Bidya, threatens to bring it out into the open again. Nine advertisements for new Bidya land registrations made by the Israeli government land officer in charge of the Arab land at the military headquarters of the West Bank appeared in the Arabic daily *Al Sha'ab* last month. It enhanced fears and speculations of yet another wave of forged land deals in the West Bank. In the new registration advertisements the land officer indicated that he had received nine requests for such registration in Bidya. He gave the names of the people, the dimensions of the plots and the exact locations. He also gave a period of 15 days for anyone contesting the ownership to submit objections to him in writing.

Jordanian Law No. 6/1964

The land registration law No. 6/1964 was first enacted by the Jordanian government before the Israeli occupation. The law gave a chance for landowners who wished to officially register their land in their names and at their own expense to do so without waiting for the government's registration process which might take a long time before reaching them. The law calls for a number of steps that should be taken before the registration is complete. One of these steps is to take out an advertisement in one or two widely-circulated local papers. The advertisement should have the name of the person requesting such registration, the location of the land, and the dimensions. There must also be an approved map of the plot signed by the neighboring landowners. The law then provides for a period of 15 days for any person who objects to such a registration to apply to the committee in charge.

Until the occupation in 1967, only 25 percent of West Bank land was registered by the government. The rest of the landowners were forced to apply for the registration under the new Israeli committee. For many the only indication of their ownership of their land is a record of tax payments in the Treasury Department. Legally such registrations are only an indication of the ownership but not an official certificate verifying it.

In 1967 after the occupation, the Israeli authorities cancelled the Jordanian government land registration process which was still underway and adjusted the law with military orders. Now most of the land dispute cases deal with lands still unregistered.

For those with no background on the subject, the advertisements appearing in *Al Sha'ab* looked very innocent. But for those who know about persistent Israeli attempts to swallow up the southern land of the village, the picture is quite different. For the very same advertisements for the very same plots of land appeared in February, 1982, in the then-Israeli government Arabic daily *Al Anba*. The same names and locations were recorded. The one major difference, however, was in the dimensions of the land plots. In the 1982 advertisements the dimensions were much larger than in the new ones.

This attempt to take these land plots failed when the landowners saw the 1982 advertisements. They hurried to the Court of Appeals in Nablus. However, while their case, as well as hundreds of others, was still under consideration a mysterious fire broke out in the Archives Department of the Nablus Courthouse on December 20, 1984, which was also shortly after the murder of al-Aqra in Bidya. All records of their appeal and the files on the case were supposedly destroyed in the fire.

Now in 1985 someone is once again trying to take the same land plots, but in more modest proportions this time. In both cases the landowners saw the advertisements with their names on them. They made it clear that they did not sell their land and that any documents signed by them in that context must have been forged or taken in a fraudulent manner. To them it is obvious that such attempts must have also entailed the collaboration of different official sources in order for all the details of the land transfers to be taken care of.

Yusef's Thumbprint

Yusef al-Qalam, a typical Palestinian farmer from Bidya, was one of those whose land appeared in the first advertisement three years ago as 270 dunums and in the second as only 41 dunums. He says that one day in March, 1981, a flock of sheep entered his land and damaged his crop. He went to tell the village *mukhtar*, who was not known at the time to be a *simsar*. The *mukhtar* told him he would take al-Qalam to a well-known lawyer in Qalqilya where he could file suit against the shepherd and make him pay for the damage.

Al-Qalam says they went together to the lawyer, who was later also known

A Palestinian farmer working his field.

to be a leading *simsar* in the region. *The simsar* lawyer then drafted papers telling al-Qalam they were official complaints against the shepherd. Al-Qalam who cannot read or write believed him. The *simsar* lawyer then accompanied him to a Notary Public who asked him only, 'Have you appointed the lawyer as your agent?' Al-Qalam said 'yes,' and then put his thumbprint on the paper believing it to be concerning a suit against the shepherd.

In 1982, a few months later, al-Qalam says he was surprised to see the *Al Anba* advertisement for land registration in his name. He immediately hired a lawyer who filed an objection in the Nablus court. They had to reappeal after the courthouse fire. "Now, I am surprised again with a new advertisement in *Al Sha'ab* concerning the same piece of land," he said.

Yusef al-Qalam, who speaks very simply and frankly, stressed his conviction that no one will be able to trespass on his land except over his dead body. The old man has spent his life taking care of the land. Though he is in his late 70s, he still spends long days on the plot, and with the crack of dawn, he is normally up and ready. When his anger reaches boiling point, he admits to raising up his hands to God demanding that He punish the traitors.

Lawyer Nidal Taha who represents many of the landowners believes that there are sufficient grounds to suspect official Israeli involvement in the land fraud. He believes the Survey Department is an example of such official complicity. How can such an official department approve certain dimensions for a certain piece of land three years ago and reapprove it again recently with dimensions less than one-seventh the original one, he asks. He believes this is proof that the original dimensions were someone's creation.

Taha maintains that the new registration advertisements are an early warning for official plans to confiscate the southern areas of Bidya. It is meant to establish footholds in order to swallow up the whole area, he says. Taha believes the timing of the new registration attempts is also interesting. He notes that the fire in the Nablus court happened only after the murder of al-Aqra in Bidya and after the trouble the Israeli company Gal, which had illegally purchased his land, faced in proving its alleged ownership of the land. He believes the new registration attempts may be yet another try now that the fire destroyed all the old documents. The companies which bought the land from the *simsars* must have invested large sums of money, says Taha, and can not give up the case so easily.

Taha is now following up the case with the Israeli land officer for the military governorate, Sami Gabai. Taha was not, however, allowed access to the new registration files, a legal right of his as a lawyer and a most essential step needed in order to file an official objection within the limited period of 15 days. "Only after you file your objections will you be allowed to get the necessary information," the officer told him. The lawyer, under the pressure of time, was then forced to submit a general objection to what he thought might be illegal and false in the new registrations, but even then he was not allowed access to the files. Another appointment with the land officer was made after two weeks. He then fought hard to get copies of a few papers. He was clearly told by Gabai that he would only be allowed to take a look at information which he (Gabai) deemed necessary. Taha protested that this was illegal, but to no avail. "The only explanation is that the department is covering up for the companies and *simsars*," he said.

It has become obvious over the past few years, that many Palestinians believe that certain official Israeli departments play an active role in facilitating the land deals. Even MK Yossi Sarid, of the Citizens Rights Movement, was quoted as saying recently that, "Most of the land deals in the area are rooted in forgery, deceit, pressure and threats."

Military Orders

In addition to giving a free hand to the Israeli companies to use all means possible in obtaining Arab land and in registering these land deals, the military authorities issued a series of military orders changing the process of land registration in the early days of the occupation.

The Jordanian land registration law No. 6/1964 was amended by three military orders — M.O.s 448, 1034 and 1060. M.O. 1060 was issued in the aftermath of the Bidya events and the murder of al-Aqra. The aim of these orders was to change the way the land was registered, the way the objections committee operates and the authority entitled to the local courts in handling disputes over land ownership, especially when there is an Israeli or a *simsar* involved.

M.O. 1060 transferred most of the court's authority to the New Registration Committee — which has its offices at the West Bank military headquarters in Betin. The order ruled that the committee, which was formed according to the Jordanian law, has now full authority to deal with land registration. It also prohibited the local courts from dealing with any objection to these registrations. It also prohibited the local courts from taking any decision or from giving any order to stop bulldozing operations and other work on the land.

The objections committee, according to the military adjustment order, has now become an absolute military committee headed by the military governor of the region or the representative of the 'administrative ruler' or whoever is appointed by the head of the 'civil administration'. Previously, this committee was headed by an Arab judge from the Court of Appeal, appointed by the military governor of the region. With this adjustment amendment, the committee is now subjected to M.O. 172 concerning the military objections committees. The danger in this arrangement, as seen by some lawyers, is that the committee gives the final decisions. But their decisions are not judicial ones in the true sense of the word. They are more like recommendations, the execution of which is subjected to the will of the General Commander of the West Bank, who can ignore them at any time he chooses. The aim of this, one lawyer said, is to take things away from the courts where lawyers are able to present evidence to prove the rights of their clients.

Circular Proxy

Another step taken to facilitate the land transfer from Arabs to Israelis was done in the form of extending the time period of the circular Proxies, from five to 15 years. A circular Proxy is a document by which a landowner signs over power of attorney over his property to a land dealer. It is circular in the sense that it can be passed from person to person. The extension of the Proxy's validity has encouraged *simsars* and others willing to sell their land to sign these Proxies over to the buyers who have a longer period of time during which they can claim the land and register it under their names. Registration in this case does not have to be done immediately, so *simsars* and landowners willing to sell feel safer thinking that the public will not know of their land deal for several years.

Notary Publics

Israeli Notary Publics were authorized to approve such Proxies. During a special investigation conducted by Israeli police in Petah Tikva, it was disclosed that some of these Israeli Notary Publics have been caught forging the documents with Israeli companies. Two of them — Sami Mualim and Uri Ben Yehuda — were arrested and then released on bail. They were charged with approving scores of forged documents to facilitate the transfer of land ownership from the Arabs who had not sold their land.

Some Arab Notary Publics and employees in these offices were also involved. Forged signatures and thumbprints of landowners on such Proxies were approved in these departments thereby facilitating the illegal transfer of large areas of land to Israeli companies. This can be easily seen by looking at circular Proxy No. 71/82 dated August 1982, which allegedly carried the thumbprint of Said M. Akanan, authorizing the sale of his land in Bidya. It was approved by the Notary Public of Salfit and also witnessed by the head of the village council. The Israeli expert who examined the Proxy stated in his report that it was a forgery. This was only recently discovered. Upon investigating the case, the police discovered that the original thumbprint had been covered by an inkspill. Lawyer Taha then appealed for the cancellation of the Proxy, but no measures were taken against the perpetrators.

Another forged Proxy was discovered at the same time. The circular Proxy No. 40/82 dated April 1982, allegedly authorized someone to sell Diab Abdallah Dalu's land in Bidya. The Proxy was indeed used to sell many pieces of Dalu's land. The Israeli expert however stated that the signature was a forgery. Yet a third Proxy was discovered recently in the name of Abd al-Rahim al-Khalili from Bidya. His lawyer discovered the Proxy after objecting to a land registration application. "It is quite clear," he said, "that it is forged since the man is illiterate and the Proxy is signed in writing." It is now being examined by the Israeli expert.

The Tabu Department

The *Tabu* (deed) Land Registration Department is also criticized by lawyers for not abiding by the Jordanian law No. 6/1964 and the amendments to it. This department in general accepted the military's version of all registration advertisements published in the government *Al Anba* newspaper. This is contrary to the law which says such advertisements must be published in a widely-circulated paper. In many cases the *simsars* used to buy all the copies carrying those ads in the occupied territories, particularly in the region concerned in order not to allow it to reach the concerned persons.

In addition the department did not make sure, as stated by law, that the advertisements were posted in a prominent place in the village, like the mosque or the *Madafi* (assembly hall) where people meet.

Mukhtars

The *Tabu* Department was also satisfied with the testimony of the village *mukhtars*. In many instances the *mukhtar* himself turned out to be a *simsar*. The *mukhtars*, according to the Jordanian law, are in possession of a legal authority they are authorized to practice in the village. Their stamps and signatures are essential for official documents. This explains why many *simsars* and collaborators were appointed by the Israeli military government to these positions. The aim was to facilitate the forgery of the land deeds.

The *Al Anba* 1982 advertisement (top). The *Al Sha'ab* 1985 advertisement (bottom).

Land Officer

According to the Jordanian law, a committee from the land office should instruct the people who are objecting to the registrations to come to the land in question with the *mukhtar* and other dignitaries of the town where a report is made and signed by the attendants after they have made a decision. Some lawyers say that according to their information this has not been done. Most of these

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The Chain of Illegal Land Deals

(1) Forgery of a land purchase contract or forgery of a Circular Proxy.

(2) The sale of the contract or proxy to an Israeli individual or company.

(3) The company now has 15 years to register the land in their name. However, since the documents are forged, registration is taken care of as quickly as possible.

(4) The company goes either to the Tabu Department for a new registration or directly to the land officer in Beit El where an often secret land deal is made.

(5) The new registration is now given a number. This needs the approval of the Survey Department on a new land map. It needs the approval of the Guardian of Absentee Property who is supposed to make sure the land does not belong to an absentee landowner. It needs the approval of the Treasury Department to make sure the taxes were paid. In some cases, it also needs the approval of the Antiquities Department to make sure the land is not an historical site.

(6) An advertisement of the new registration is taken out in a local newspaper. Objections must then be filed within 15 days.

(7) If no objections are filed or they are overruled, the land is registered in the company's name. The company is now given the Koshan (final deed) to which no one can object.

Settlers' Firepower Something To Be Reckoned With

Settler leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger flashes his artillery.

A map of the West Bank with areas of settler concentration pinpointed.

by Ze'ev Schiff/*HaAretz*

Deterred by the vigorous reaction of the prime minister and some of the cabinet ministers, the West Bank settlers' council amended its defiant resolution branding any government ready to agree to territorial compromise on the West Bank an "illegal government". All the same, few people believe that the affair has thus been brought to a conclusion. Attorney Eliakim Ha'etzni's detailed contingency plans for action against the state, which he presented to the council [at the beginning of November — ed.], are one indication of this.

Those familiar with what's going on in the occupied territories know that readiness to take up arms against Jews in the event that territorial compromise ever becomes a real possibility is not confined to a nucleus of extremists. Some settlers speak openly of this, laying great emphasis on their love for Israel; the notion that by their readiness for bloodshed they are actually inciting to hatred of Israel is overlooked.

For some time now, security experts have assessed the extent of readiness to rebel against the government — i.e. precipitate a civil war — in such a situation to be widespread among the settlers. In the top echelons of the army, they talk about the dangers posed by "our hooligans" who are capable of extreme actions, of which the bombing of the mosques on the Temple Mount [Al-Aqsa Mosque — ed.] is only one example.

My intention here is not to deal with the burgeoning anti-democratic trend among the settlers, but rather with their military potential, a potential that has grown over the years. Although *Aleph-Yod* and *Hamsan's* [settler publications — ed.] calls for civil war are indeed incitement to rebellion, the attempt of the West Bank settlers' council to replace the Knesset and threaten the Israeli government that it will be considered "illegal" [if it cedes territory under Israeli control], unlike the calls of the newspapers cited above, is much more serious: the settlers' council has divisions at its command which lend its threats a certain credence.

The settlers' military potential encompasses "soldiers" and sympathizers (both in the settlements and in Israel) and a lot of arms and equipment, to say nothing of the settlements they control... I believe that the state of Israel has actually lost control of the vast amount of arms distributed to the settlers [ostensibly — ed.] for their own protection. There are those who claim that the Israeli army has records of all the arms in the settlers' possession; however, others say that at best the records only cover about 80 percent of the arms involved. The more I investigated the matter, the clearer it became that owing to the fact that the settlers have been armed by more than one source, the figures are far from accurate.

The settlers have been supplied with arms by their regional defense network, their reserve army units, and through private acquisition. The attempt of the central command to tidy things up in regard to the settlers' personal weapons set off a resounding cry from the settlers, who were convinced that the army had decided to reclaim its arms. Actually, its intention was simply to collect the extras and return them to the regional defense command. But this proved to be impossible.

The West Bank regional defense network is an unusual military institution in comparison with other regional defense networks set up since the establishment of the state, including the one operating on the Golan Heights. The big push for its establishment came from Rafael Eitan during his stint as army chief-of-staff. Like all regional defense networks it is supposed to operate for the protection of the settlements by the inhabitants thereof. However, in contrast to other regional defense networks, the West Bank network does not confine itself to defense of border settlements; even settlements in the heart of the West Bank are part of the network.

The members of these settlements are part of the network and are required not only to protect their own settlements in case of war, they are also supposed to defend West Bank traffic arteries.

General Eitan granted the West Bank regional defense network high priority in regard to equipment and arms and provided it with excellent manpower. Many settlers who were attached to combat units were taken out of their units and transferred to West Bank regional defense units. Up to that time it was common practice to keep high quality combat soldiers in combat units, long considered the fist of the Israeli army. As a result of Eitan's decision, the combat quality of the troops in the West Bank regional defense network is higher than that of any other network. Of the approximately 52,000 Israeli residents of the West Bank, there are at present thousands who carry arms in the region.

Another point worth citing is that the settlers are actively involved in Israeli army activities in the region. This takes many forms. Members of the regional defense network — i.e. local residents — frequently serve as armed escorts during their reserve service; they also take part in arrests of suspicious Arabs. Some of the settler leaders serve as officers and commanders in the regional defense network. Political and religious leaders like Rabbi Levinger come to the Israeli army with operational suggestions, such as demolition of homes, expulsions and so on. At the last meeting between army Chief-of-Staff Moshe Levy and settler representatives in Kiryat Arba, Rabbi Levinger permitted himself to speak to the chief-of-staff in a sharp and chastising manner, almost as though General Levy was his subordinate. There was also an instance in which settler representatives requested to meet with the minister of defense at the time, Moshe Arens, on condition that Central Region Commander Ori Orr was not present at the meeting.

The settlers' involvement in security matters also takes indirect forms. For example, there is the operation of a special patrol under the command of the regional internal affairs officer of the West Bank 'civil administration' which patrols the area to prevent illegal construction, use of state land by Arabs, and entry into firing ranges. Actually, this patrol is subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior. Lately, a decision was taken to appoint an army man to be in charge of the patrol, but the settlers fiercely opposed this.

The settlers' defense network, like their settlement infrastructure, was set up with state funds and is fueled by state monies. The threats of some of their leaders to protest against the government by cutting some of their connections with it (e.g. refusal to do reserve military service) is a double-edged sword. While it's possible that if the authorities ever decide to disarm the settlers, they may find the task difficult, if not well nigh impossible, the settlers exist on the monies of Israeli taxpayers, and indirectly through the vast amount of American aid to Israel, so that by cutting off these funds and Israeli army support, pressure could easily be applied.

It's important to stress this at present, with all the talk of rebellion that has lately been emanating from the settlers. Many people believe that the Golem [legendary Jewish "Frankenstein" — ed.] will turn against its maker, namely the state. Perhaps such a confrontation is unavoidable if in future Israel agrees to territorial compromise in the framework of a peace agreement. Until then a lot depends on how the prime minister and defense minister instruct the Israeli army and the General Security Service to operate in regard to any security infringements by the settlers in the occupied territories. Thus far, the government legal advisor has been steadfast in this respect.

Not only Palestinian 'terrorism' in the occupied territories should worry the Israeli people, but also the extremist settlers, who may one day take the insane step of igniting a [civil war] and drawing thousands in their wake. (Translation: *Ha'aretz*, November 15, 1985).

Palestinian Sulha II
Mediating in Land and Honor Disputes

by Said al-Ghazali

The process of *Sulha*, or reconciliation, is a daily occurrence in the southern areas of Palestine, particularly around the Hebron area. This system is based on the tribal codes passed down generation to generation since the pre-Islamic period 1400 years ago. Following is the continuation of last week's article on Palestinian *Sulha* written by *Al Fajr's* Said al-Ghazali.

One of the most important areas of offense requiring *Sulha*, or reconciliation, is the sale of land to forbidden buyers. This is particularly true since Israel's occupation of all of Palestine. Sale of land to Israelis is now forbidden and is considered a great offense.

Land Sale

On August 10, 1975 in the presence of Israeli military officers, Khader Abu Sabha, a famous tribal judge from the village of Sawahreh, issued an important verdict in which he ruled that any person who sells land to Jews will have his blood shed in vain and his family will receive no compensation and there will be no *Atwa* or temporary truce. In issuing a verdict regarding a plot of land which was illegally sold to Israeli authorities, Abu Sabha said, "I am Khader Muhammad Hassan Abdel Qader known as Haj Khader Abu Sabha from east Sawahreh and *mukhtar* of Ja'afreh. I decide the following about any person who illegally sells land owned by other people. The landowners can do whatever they want to do to him. He will no longer have recognized rights and his blood will be shed in vain whether it happens immediately after the sale or years following."

Abu Sabha's decisions involved the 745-dunum plot of Dahoudieh land in Bethlehem which was sold to Israeli authorities by the use of forged documents. Abu Sabha's decision was endorsed by Haj Muhammad Musa Amr from Dura, *Sheikh* Hamad Abu Rabi'a from Tal-Arad in Beer Sheba and Haj Freij al-Masdar from Khan Yunis, all three prominent tribal judges.

In response, Israeli authorities immediately placed Abu Sabha under town arrest. He remained thus for 10 years until only last month when he received a letter from the Israeli authorities notifying him that the arrest order had been cancelled.

Abu Sabha believes that to some degree even judges in the Israeli courts have respected his land verdict. When Mansour Ayed, a resident of Ta'amreh, was arrested on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization, possession of weapons and the torching of a vehicle belonging to one of the local *simsars*, or Arab land dealers who often sell illegally to Jews, he told the judges in the Lydda military court that he had acted in accordance to tribal law. Abu Sabha was then summoned to the court where he read his famous decision. He reported that the Israeli judge asked him if he would have issued the same verdict if the land had been sold to an Arab. Abu Sabha said "no" because the Islamic constitution — the Quran — prohibits selling lands to "unbelievers".

Honor or Ard

The tribal codes are perhaps most strict in cases involving family *Ard* or honor, which in traditional Palestinian society is based primarily on protection of the women in the family. If a man admits that he has raped a woman — an offense equivalent to murder — her family members will seek to kill him. In effect, he has sold them his life. If they do not kill him, then he must buy back his life. In ancient times, he brought camels and lined them one by one until the line reached her father's house. Today his family goes through the *Atwa* and *Sulha* as if it were a murder case.

If a man attacks a married woman in the house of her husband, the husband will try to kill him. If he does not kill the attacker, he may charge the attacker's family an amount worth four times the price of her dowry at the time of the marriage. The wife is then separated and taken away to her family who will also try to kill the attacker, unless he attempts to buy back his life.

If a man seduces a married woman but does not technically rape her, her relatives may kill her and are obligated to pay back the dowry to her husband. They also may request that the seducer's family kill him. If not, the seducer's family must pay compensation and buy back his life from the family of the woman.

The tribal judge Abu Fannar, from Yatta, dealt with a case of *Ard* or honor from Mazra'a Sharqieh near Ramallah. He said that the *mukhtar* of Surif transferred the case to him. According to the testimony of the seduced woman, a lawyer in Ramallah seduced her, the daughter of his blind uncle. He promised to marry her and she believed him. When she became pregnant, she asked him to fulfill his promise, but he refused claiming that he was an important man and could not defame his good reputation. He urged her to testify that she had been seduced by her younger brother and that then he, the lawyer, would marry her. She did so. But later realizing that her cousin had been deceiving her, she went to the *mukhtar* of Surif and told him everything. The *mukhtar* recorded her confession and asked Abu Fannar to issue a verdict on the case.

Abu Fannar said he listened to her version and to the testimony of her cousin who denied having any relations with her. Abu Fannar tried to convince him to marry her but he refused. Abu Fannar believes that she is telling the truth but is *Mowashwesheh*, meaning she agreed to the fornication.

Abu Fannar's ruling in the case was to oblige the lawyer and four of his relatives to swear to his sincerity and to have them pay the *Taiha Tala*, the guarantor of his oath, because he doubts the lawyer's story but cannot prove his guilt. Abu Fannar said that if she had had a strong family, he would have been forced to marry her or be killed.

Robbery

The tribal code involving theft is very straightforward. If anyone steals something from a neighbor's house and is discovered he must return what he stole multiplied four times. Besides this, he must bring the *Jaha* (mediators) and begin the process of *Sulha*, or reconciliation.

He must also make reconciliation if he does not succeed in stealing anything but is still caught. According to the tradition, the thief is liable to the traditional punishment and, in addition, he must bring his neigbor a camel for every step he took from the point from which he began his approach to the house. In addition he should slaughter a number of goats. Members of the *Jaha* usually interfere in an effort to lighten the punishment and, in most cases, the house owner shows tolerance and gets back only what he lost.

If a thief tries to rob a house and, in his attempt, kills one or more of the house owner's family each of the dead will be worth the lives of four persons. If the thief tries to steal and is himself killed in the process, the house owner will take a formal *Atwa* or truce. The thief's rights to compensation will be very little in such a case.

The Oath

The person who wants to deliver an oath is asked first to perform the ritual ablution before prayer. He goes to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem or to al-Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron or any similar holy place. He puts his hand on the Quran and swears by God or the Quran that he is sincere.

Critical Views on Sulha

"The tribal judicial system in general," said Jamil Salhout, a local journalist and teacher, "does not fit with civilization's progress and the authority of state law." At times when the ruling governmental structures in Palestine were weak, residents used the traditional tribal codes to solve their internal problems. Salhout said that tribal unity in the pre-Islamic period has now been replaced by the unity of the people. Therefore, an attack on one person does not ignite the long wars which often happened hundreds of years ago. "I believe at this time since there is no Palestinian state, it is good to practise the traditional way of reconciliation. Israeli law was not made to correspond to the needs of our society."

Samir Abu Asa'ab, an *Imam* at a mosque in Jerusalem who regularly attends nearby reconciliation meetings and attempts to introduce Islamic rule in the process of reconciliation, said the traditional tribal judges have no written constitution by which they operate. Therefore the traditional law is changeable. "We as Muslims, however, have our own Quranic constitution," he said.

Abu Asa'ab gave the following example to show how he uses Islamic law: A few months ago, a man, his fiancee and her sister were riding in a car travelling toward Jericho. The vehicle collided with an Israeli settler's car. The man's finance was paralyzed. The two families then asked Abu Asa'ab to decide whether or not the man must be obliged to marry her, whether or not he has the right to take back his dowry or whether or not he should pay compensation to her family. Abu Asa'ab, after studying similar incidents which occurred during the Islamic rule under Caliph Omar Ben Khatab, ruled that he should not be forced to marry her, but that he cannot take back the dowry. Her family also cannot ask for compensation from him, since he was neither directly nor indirectly responsible for the incident.

On August 20 of this year more than 500 activists of tribal law held a three-day conference in Jerusalem and issued a recommendation to combine Islamic law with the traditional tribal code.

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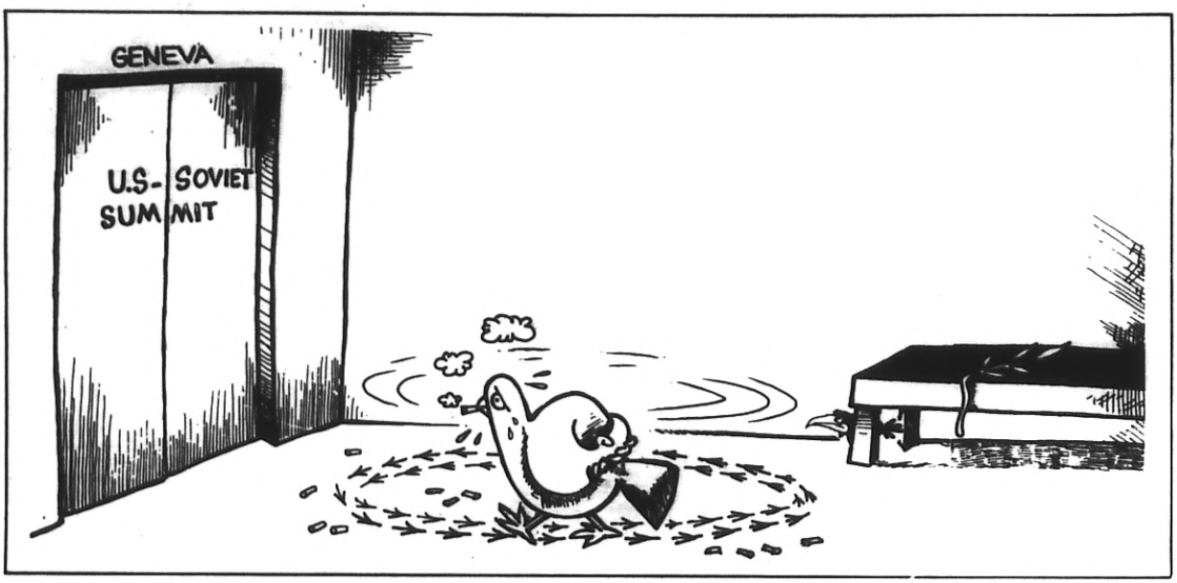
Palestinians making the necessary *Atwa* preparations.



Local daily newspapers covered various local and international issues in their front page headlines, as well as in their editorials. The Syrian-Jordanian rapprochement was widely covered by all the local papers. *Al Quds* and *Al Sha'ab* highlighted Abu Iyad's support for the rapprochement. *Al Fajr* gave prominence to a call by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to Syria to join the Amman agreement.

All newspapers gave prominence to the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Geneva.

In their editorials, all newspapers voiced praise of the Soviet stand on the Palestinian question, particularly linking USSR attendance of an international conference on the Middle East to the participation of the PLO. They also condemned the US stand. *Al Sha'ab* newspaper, however, said it did not expect the summit to produce anything.

Rapprochement is in the Interest of All Parties

Solidarity and the unification of the Arab world has always been the strategic aim of the Palestinian people and its leadership. Arab division, disintegrations and dispute have been the loopholes through which the enemies of the cause entered. Therefore, Rifa'i's visit to Damascus is not very far from the Palestinian aim. It is part of the Palestinian effort to patch up differences. The Syrian-Jordanian statement lies within the broad guidelines of the Amman agreement. The two sides asserted that the Palestinian cause is the essence of the joint Arab effort and that its solution should be achieved through an international conference not through separate agreements or direct negotiations. The restoration of the Jordanian-Syrian relations is undoubtedly an important step especially if the PLO and Egypt are included. The exclusion of the PLO is not in the interest of the Arab nation. And any Arab move without the PLO is futile. The normalization between Jordan and Syria will achieve a lot if it leads to the gradual normalization of the Palestinian-Syrian relations.

AL QUDS
November 14

The Required Support

The Palestinian National Fund started its meetings in Amman to discuss the financial and economic affairs concerning the support of the occupied territories' residents and the fund's deficit. We would like to point out that the best way to support these residents is to set up economic development projects. Such projects will help us fight unemployment which has led many people to emigrate. They will also help us reclaim land which is under the threat of being confiscated. To achieve these two goals the Palestinian fund should give top priority to implementing such developmental projects. We should also like, in this regard, to ask the wealthy Arab countries to reconsider their negative positions and to fulfill their commitments to the fund.

AL FAJR
November 15

Egypt and the International Conference

The position expressed by Osama al-Baz confirming Egypt's commitment to an international conference as a means to solve the Palestinian problem is a significant one that deserves attention. Egypt used to declare its adherence to the Camp David accords calling for direct negotiations with Israel. So, President Mubarak's declaration that the solution of the Palestinian problem should be brought about through an international conference was a real surprise to observers. Though some circles are trying to underestimate this Egyptian change, the Egyptian officials reiterated their position on many occasions.

Al-Baz's statement following the Jordanian-Syrian reconciliation serves as a reminder of the Egyptian position and of the fact that the PLO is the major party to the cause. No one can exclude it. There is no doubt now that Egypt's return to the Arab camp has become a vital strategic necessity. And this is the significance of al-Baz's statement, when he referred to the tripartite understanding among the PLO, Egypt and Jordan, that an international conference should be convened. The question now is why an Arab summit should not be convened to consider Egypt's return and restore Arab solidarity. The positive expectations of such a summit are far greater than those of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit.

AL QUDS
November 15

Murphy's Tour

Observers may notice that American and European envoys undertake their mission in the area either after political or military attacks, or in preparation for them. The expected visit by Murphy to the area comes in this context. The success of the scenario prepared by American imperialism together with Arab reactionaries brought Murphy back to the area very quickly. His tour is to reap the fruits of the scenario which leads to the implementation of the second part of Camp David. But our Palestinian people have rejected American imperialism.

AL MITHAQ
November 18

The Soviet Attitude

The Soviet spokesperson reaffirmed the Soviet position toward the Palestinian cause and the PLO. The spokesperson emphasized that Moscow will not restore its relations with Israel unless the latter agrees to the PLO's participation in the Middle East peace negotiations within an international framework. The spokesperson denied Western reports about Soviet-Israeli relations and the Soviet Jewry. This Soviet stand puts things in their proper perspective and on the right path toward a solution to the problem. We hope that there will be a unified Arab stand in support of it.

AL SHA'AB
November 18

The Success of the Summit is Urgent

The leaders of the two superpowers have only eight hours to discuss a wide range of issues. They do not even have an agenda listing these various issues according to priority. Today the eyes of the people all over the world look to Geneva in the hope that the two leaders will be able to ease the tension between their two countries. The two sides devote efforts to general issues and each is trying to demonstrate that he is seeking peace. We do not think that this summit will surmount all problems. But we hope it will fix dates for future meetings as soon as possible. If tension is relaxed between them then there will be a relaxation of tension everywhere. One of the most important issues is the Palestinian problem. We, as a people looking for peace, saw a ray of hope in the Soviet statements. But this does not mean we are on the threshold of a solution. The road is a long one. Peace in the Middle East can be achieved if the US and Israel decide to face facts in the area. Yet the success of this summit is an urgent need. We hope it will open new venues for better relations.

AL QUDS
November 19

Nablus

Continued from page 1

This area consumed nearly 2000 kilowatts.

The Israeli officials completed the takeover of these areas a month ago. Nearly 50 percent of the actual capacity of the Nablus network is now substituted by Israeli current.

Local Opposition

Nablus residents say that it is now obvious that the Israeli authorities have finally had to resort to such underhanded tactics and even outright threats in order to complete their takeover of the Nablus Electricity Network. It became clear to the Israelis, they say, that local residents were not going to beg for Israeli electricity, despite the obstacles placed in the way of the local company including even banning the import of spare parts for the company motors.

Nablus residents are aware of the dangers of linking to the Israeli grid, both politically and economically. They say that the condition of electricity supply in those areas already linked to the Israeli power is no better than those under Nablus power. The price of the current has not come down any, they say, and they complain of delayed repairs especially during the numerous Jewish holidays.

The 45 engineers and workers employed by the Nablus Electricity Network stress their intent to keep the company operational despite the fact that they have not received their salaries from the Joint Jordanian-Palestinian Committee for four months now. After Shaka'a's dismissal from office, they continued to receive their salaries from the committee. But their money was frequently delayed for a few months at a time. Some interpret the delay as an attempt at pressuring them to denounce Shaka'a and much of the municipal council for their political stands in opposition to the convening of the 17th Palestine National Council meeting last November in Amman.

The Joint Committee now claims to be low on funds and incapable of paying the workers' salaries. "Unfortunately, the Joint Committee does not evaluate the stand of the workers, and the Israelis want to minimize the company so we become mere meter readers and money collectors. But we will be steadfast," said Adnan Darhali, the chief engineer at the main power station.

The local electricity project which is owned by the Nablus Municipality was established in 1957. It has been expanded several times over the years. During the time of the elected municipal council in 1980, four new motors were installed. The old motors, however, were eventually turned off for lack of maintenance, a step which set the power company back. The elected municipal council had plans to construct a new power station in 1986 which would have covered all the electricity needs of the city and surrounding areas for the coming 10 years. However, this project was put aside when the Israelis took over the municipality.

The local company power covers an area of 30 kilometers west of Nablus, 15 kilometers north and 12 kilometers east including approximately 140,000 customers. Residents fear that extending Israeli current to this area will mean the area's development is held hostage to Israeli will, the political implications of which are barely short of outright Israeli annexation.

* JOURNALISTS * ACADEMICS * POLITICAL ACTIVISTS *

AL FAJR has prepared a comprehensive pocket diary containing local information on the WEST BANK, GAZA STRIP and PRE-1967 PALESTINE.
Such information is often difficult to find and has never before been compiled in one place.
The AL FAJR DIARY contains addresses and phone numbers of:

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As well as HOTELS - RESTAURANTS - TRANSPORTATION in Jerusalem.

In addition the AL FAJR DIARY gives you a historical overview, information about the PLO, the major UN resolutions, maps, useful Arabic phrases, holidays and important dates AND MUCH MORE.

This compact diary (8.5 X 16 cm) is available from AL FAJR.
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* *The price quoted in last week's issue is excluding postage, not including as printed.*

Peace Talks

Continued from page 5

Naturally, there are Palestinians who prefer a Jordanian solution to nothing at all, especially businessmen who are hurt by Israel's economic policy in the occupied land. At the same time there are Palestinians who prefer to stay under Israeli rule to any Arab government. But these remain a minority whose opinions cannot find enough support to give them any weight. They know very well that a settlement outside PLO concession is not favorable in the occupied territories. The majority of the people in the West Bank and Gaza – in the refugee camps, villages, schools – are staunch supporters of the PLO and an independent Palestinian state. They are not willing to accept anything less.

Therefore, no matter how Jordan and Israel will cooperate to install pro-Jordan Palestinian figures in sensitive positions in the major cities, like mayors, these figures will not be able to deliver what they will be expected to. As long as these figures do not have the popular base, Jordan should not expect much from them.

No matter what may be the mistakes of the PLO, its international image, its internal differences, its strengths or weaknesses, Jordan, or any Arab country for that matter, will need the PLO if it is to convince the Palestinians to go along with any settlement that may be reached. The PLO is a crucial partner in any peace talks that will determine the future of the Palestinian people. It is actually the trump card. Any effort to rule it out of the ball game will be futile. This fact has been recognized by all former American presidents and officials who did not have enough guts to say so while in office. It is time present leaders learn from their predecessors.

In addition, Jordan will need the Soviet Union and other Arab countries if it is to put enough pressure on Israel and the US to force them to make the right concessions. Without the Soviet Union, for instance, the US and Israel would take advantage of Jordan's weakness to force from it what they want.

The Israeli-US pressure on Jordan to enter direct talks with Israel is evidently nothing more than a trap to keep the Arabs divided and weak. Neither the US or Israel, without considerable pressure on them, are ready to deliver even the minimum of Arab demands. Therefore, Jordan would be signing its own death warrant if it were to fall into this trap.

AN APPEAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES TO GORBACHEV-REAGAN ON THE OCCASION OF THE SUMMIT IN GENEVA ON 19-20 NOVEMBER

Mayors, heads of local and village councils, the personalities, the national institutions, the charitable societies, women's organizations, academic societies, unions, and residents in the occupied territories sent an appeal to the two superpower leaders scheduled to meet in Geneva. Following is the text of their statement:

We, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories living under the fateful circumstances through which the Palestinian cause goes, and in the face of all the desperate hostile attempts to falsify our will and abort our revolution and to cast doubt around our sole legitimate leadership, the PLO, we deem it our right and deem it necessary to reaffirm the following inalienable facts:

1. The PLO is the sole legitimate representative of our Palestinian people. It embodies the will and the national aspirations of our people to achieve their right to return, self-determination, an independent state on Palestinian soil, under the leadership of the PLO which embodies the people, land and cause.
2. The lasting and just peace looked forward to by our people and which is sought by its leadership, is a peace based on the recognition of our right to return, self-determination and the establishment of a Palestinian state under the leadership of the PLO without which no just settlement can be achieved.
3. We firmly reassert our adherence to the independence of the Palestinian national decision. We reaffirm our absolute rejection of bargaining over that independence or submitting to pressures or falsification. We express our solid support of Palestinian legitimacy represented by the legitimate leadership of the PLO.
4. We absolutely support the position of the PLO calling for the solution of the Palestinian problem within the framework of international legitimacy, represented by an international peace conference to be attended by the permanent members of the UN security council and all concerned parties including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
5. At this time when the two giants meet in Geneva, we demand that they take into consideration the position of our people in the occupied territories. This position is supportive of the PLO and rallying around it. We have expressed absolute confidence in the PLO. And we demand that it should be given the chance to participate in the efforts for achieving a just political settlement of the Palestinian cause.
6. We are highly appreciative of the Soviet Union's position and that of the Socialist bloc countries supporting our cause and which understands the aspirations of our people. We also emphasize our appreciation of all peace-loving countries and forces which support our right to self-determination and to an independent state. We denounce and condemn the persistence of the US and Israel in denying the rights of our people and their attempt to obliterate its cause and forge its identity.
7. We see in the Fez plan, endorsed by the Palestinian National Council (PNC) in its 16th and 17th sessions, the minimum for any political settlement of the Palestinian cause. We affirm our solid and clear adherence to the PNC's resolutions and their embodiment of the will of our people and its aspirations for peace.
8. We reject the notion that Arab bilateral relations be established at the expense of our people's interests. We emphasize our support of Arab rapprochement and our keenness in it within the context of mutual respect, and non-interference in the affairs of the Palestinian revolution or the attempt to infringe on its legitimate leadership or on the independence of its decision.
9. We envisage the Amman agreement and any steps taken by the Palestinian legitimate leadership, as steps on the road to create favorable conditions for the convening of an international conference for peace in the Middle East under the auspices of all the permanent members of the UN Security Council at the head of which stands the Soviet Union.
10. We renew our pledge to the elected and legitimate leadership of the PLO led by Yasser Arafat. We rally around it and assert our readiness to offer all sacrifices to safeguard its independence and to forestall any attempts aiming at belittling the independence of our national decision or at casting doubt over the oneness of the PLO's representation of our people and its embodiment of the aspirations of our people to return, independence, freedom and the establishment of an independent state on its national soil.

Long live the struggle of our people.
Long live the PLO, our sole legitimate repesentative.
Yes, to the independent National Decision.
Glory and eternity to our dutiful martyrs.

(Translation from *Al Fajr* Arabic daily November 18, 1985.)

Dear subscribers,

Some of our American subscribers have not been receiving *Al Fajr* on a regular basis this fall. While there may be occasional postal delays, we must also consider the possibility of tampering.

If you subscribe to *Al Fajr* and have had delivery problems, please contact our Washington office immediately.

You may write us, or call (202) 466-3538. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in this matter, so that we may better serve you, our readership.

If any subscriber from Europe has also had delivery problems, please call or write to our Jerusalem office.

November 14, 1985

TWO GAZANS JAILED

The military court sentenced 35-year-old Nusseirat resident Nimr Salam Adwan to 16 years in prison and 9 years suspended. The court also sentenced 38-year-old Salman Salim Jad Allah to 14 years in prison and 11 years suspended. He is from Nusseirat. Both are accused of membership in a Palestinian organization, possession of arms and carrying out military operations.

SHEEP HERD IMPOUNDED

The Israeli authorities impounded about 500 sheep belonging to Arieh Samu', in the Hebron district. The sheep were taken in the Nablus area. The authorities charged the owners IS1,377,000 and forced them to leave the area.

November 15, 1985

NABLUS MAN JAILED

An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Atef Abd al-Majiud Hamdan, 41, of Nablus to one year in prison. He was charged with illegal possession of weapons.

BEIT SAFAFA YOUTH JAILED

An Israeli military court in Lydda sentenced Hassan Mustafa Abu Dilu of Beit Safafa village, west of Jerusalem, to 19 months in jail. He was charged with membership in a Palestinian organization and weapons training.

AL-MUGHEIR RESIDENT JAILED

An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Lutfi Fayez Jaber, of al-Mugheir village in the Ramallah area, to 1.5 years in prison and a similar suspended sentence on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization.

November 17, 1985

BUS FIRED UPON

An Israeli Dan bus was attacked with gunfire and a petrol bomb as it passed near Danabah village in the Tulkarm area. Israel Radio said no one was hurt and no damage was done.

November 18, 1985

TWO HOUSES DEMOLISHED

Israeli bulldozers demolished the home of Yusef Hamed Jaber in al-Baka'a area east of Hebron on the pretext that it had been built without a license. The 5-room residence was built in 1978 and is home to 12 individuals.

In nearby Tarqoumyah, Israeli bulldozers destroyed the home of Ramadan Muhammad Saleh al-Shalalfeh on the same pretext.

LAND CONFISCATED

The Israeli army is trying to grab 10,000 dunums of land belonging to the village of Aqraba in the Nablus area. The land is owned by local farmers, who have vowed to fight against the planned expropriation. Army bulldozers tried to pave a road leading to one of the settlements in the area, but were confronted by the landowners and residents.

NAFHA PRISON – BAD CONDITIONS

Palestinian political detainees at the notorious Nafha Prison in the Naqab desert are living under extremely harsh conditions. They fear the authorities will launch a bloody assault on them similar to the one against detainees in Asqalan prison about 2 months ago.

Prison authorities have reportedly stepped up provocative measures against inmates in Nafha, and have recently confiscated all books in their possession.

BETHLEHEM UNIVERSITY STUDENT DETAINED

Israeli authorities detained Ibrahim al-Talbisi, 25, a student at Bethlehem University and jailed him for 6 months under administrative detention orders. He is a resident of Beit Amer village in the Hebron district.

BEDUIN WOMAN SENTENCED

The Israeli Magistrates Court in Beer Sheba sentenced a young Beduin woman to 3 months in jail on charges of burning an Israeli flag. Maha Abu Rukeik, 18, was charged with removing the flag from atop the police station in Rahat and setting it on fire.

November 19, 1985

CURFEW LIFTED

Military authorities lifted a 3-day curfew imposed on Danabeh village in the Tulkarm area following a petrol bomb attack on an Israeli bus. The army maintained checkpoints in the village.

AL-BIREH MARKET RAIDED

Israeli troops raided the outdoor vegetable market in al-Bireh and banned vendors from selling vegetables outside the market. No reasons were given for this move.

CAVES DYNAMITED

Explosives experts in the Israeli army blew up 3 caves in the Beit Sahur area. Members of the armed Surif group are alleged to have hidden in them. Israel Radio said the demolition was to make sure the caves will not be used in the future.

ARBUNA BOY GETS 7 YEARS

The Nazareth District Court sentenced a minor from the village of Arbuna in the Jenin area to 7 years in prison on charges of helping the killers of two Israeli teachers near Afula. The court banned the publication of the minor's name because of his age.

BZU EMPLOYEES STRIKE

Teachers and employees at Bir Zeit University went on a 1-day warning strike to protest a decision by the Board of Trustees to cut 40 percent of their salaries as of next month due to the financial crisis. The strikers staged a sit-in strike in front of the administration building and called for cancelling the new decision.

TRAVEL BAN

Military authorities have banned residents of villages in the Jenin area from travelling to Jordan over the past few weeks. Among these villages are Arrabeh, Qabatya, Bir al-Basha and Jenin camp.

30 PUPILS TO GO ON TRIAL

Thirty high school pupils from the Galilee village of Majdal Shams are to go on trial on charges of illegally demonstrating and blocking roads. The pupils were protesting against the dismissal of a teacher for political reasons.

CUSTOMS RAID IN QALQILYA

Israeli customs officials raided a number of shops in Qalqilya and examined prices and registration books. The city's merchants expressed resentment at the raids and called on the Chamber of Commerce to intervene to put an end to these provocative measures.

PALESTINIAN WRITER KILLED IN CAR ACCIDENT

Palestinian writer Safa' Zaytoun, wife of Dr. Nabil Sha'ath, member of the Palestine National Council and adviser to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, was killed in a car accident in Cairo Sunday. She was 47. Safa', an Egyptian, studied at the College of Commerce in Alexandria where she met her husband. She travelled with him to the US and later to Lebanon, where she worked in the PLO's Palestinian Planning Center for several years.

In 1978 she moved with her husband to Cairo, where she participated in various activities in the service of the Palestinian cause. She also wrote and translated a series of books. Among the books she wrote is one about the Sabra and Shatila massacre and another *Children and War*.

Safa' is survived by three children.

SCIENCE COLLEGE STUDENTS SUSPEND STUDIES

The students at the College of Science and Technology in Abu Dis suspended studies to protest the administration's refusal to permit the formation of a student council. The students' action will continue until the administration responds to the students' demands.

A joint Arab-Jewish demonstration outside the American Embassy in Tel Aviv November 19. The demonstration was organized by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality.

Alex Odeh, 41, was a long-term activist with the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee even before he joined the ADC as a regional director in 1982. Alex has served his community and his people throughout his 13 years in this country. He is survived by his wife Norma and their three daughters, aged 2, 5 and 7. Alex did not have a life insurance policy that would provide for his family in the event of his death. ADC intends to do everything in its power as an organization to help take care of Alex's family, since he died in the act of expressing the high ideals of truth and justice which are advocated by ADC members everywhere.

ADC has established a special fund for Norma Odeh and her three young daughters. Please send your donations and your notes of condolence to:

Mrs. Norma Odeh
c/o ADC National Office
1731 Connecticut Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

We urge you to respond right away and to involve as many of your friends and neighbors as you can.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dear readers,

As you may have noticed, *Al Fajr* has added a calendar of events covering not only Jerusalem and the territories, but also the United States, Europe and Canada. We invite you to share your events with us by contacting the Jerusalem office for European events, or the Washington D.C. office for events in the United States and Canada.

Al Fajr not only wants to share your work with all of its readers, but would like to help you reach the largest possible audience. Please contact us for events in your area.

Readers are invited to advertise events free of charge: Wednesdays are the deadline for publication in the next issue.

November 22

Theater: *Earthquake*. A relatively new group from Beit 'Anan called 'Aidoon Theater Co. will present this play at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater, Jerusalem, 5:30 p.m. In Arabic. Telephone: 280957, 288189.

November 23

Music: After long years in exile, Mustafa el-Kurd has returned to his birthplace, Jerusalem. He will be giving a concert at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater, 6:30 p.m.

November 28, 29, 30 December 1

Theater: The Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater is proud to present the opening of a new show — excerpts from Dario Fo's *Mistero Buffo* performed by Yusef Abu Wardeh and directed by Francois Abu Salem, 7:00 p.m. In Arabic.

EVENTS IN EUROPE

November 30

Special Day: The French NGO Coordinating Committee will sponsor a special day at the Mutualite Center in Paris, entitled "Problems facing young Palestinians." Between 2:00-8:00 p.m.

December 2-18

Theater: El-Hakawati Theater Troupe is travelling to England to present *The Story of the Eye and the Tooth* at the Almeida Theater, Islington, London. All performances will be at 8:00 p.m. except for the premiere on December 2, which will be at 7:00 p.m. Telephone: (01) 3594404.

EVENTS IN THE US

November 19 — December 9

Exhibit: "Beyond Arabesque," an exhibit featuring nine contemporary artists from Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Algeria, Iraq and Morocco at the Alif Gallery, Washington, D.C.

November 23-26

Annual Meeting: The 19th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in New Orleans, Louisiana, will be held jointly with the African Studies Association. About 200 MESA panels with three to five speakers each will cover the gamut of Middle East topics.

November 24 — December 15

Music: Marcel Khalife and Al-Mayadeen are doing a concert tour of the United States and Canada. All proceeds will go toward supplies and materials for hospitals and health facilities in south Lebanon, as well as toward rebuilding Palestinian refugee camps. The scheduled US dates are as follows: Nov. 24 — Houston, Tx., Nov. 29 — San Diego, Ca., Nov. 30 — Los Angeles, Ca., Dec. 1 — San Francisco, Ca., Dec. 6 — Portland, Oregon, Dec. 8 — Denver, Colorado, Dec. 13 — Washington, D.C., Dec. 14 — Boston, Dec. 15 — New York City. Readers should watch for further information in their areas regarding concert locations and times.

November 29

Solidarity Day: International day of solidarity with the Palestinian people. Events at the United Nations, New York City.

Solidarity Evening: To commemorate the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people, an evening of solidarity and culture featuring speakers, *dabkeh* and refreshments will be held at the Washington Hotel, Washington, D.C., 7:00 p.m.

November 30 — December 1

Convention: United Holy Land Fund convention at the Marriott Hotel, Newark Airport, Newark, NJ. Speakers from Lebanon and the West Bank. Call the hotel at (201) 6230006 or the Fund at (312) 6639056.

November 30 — February 16

Exhibit: "Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria," an exhibition of nearly 300 objects, including jewelry, sculpture and mosaics from ancient Syria at the Museum of Natural History in Denver, Colorado.

December 1

Calligraphy Workshop: Open house, 4:00-6:00 p.m., at the William G. Abdullah Memorial Library in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, featuring a calligraphy workshop with Wafa Salman.

December 2

Film: The film *Occupied Palestine* will be screened to commemorate the international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people. For further information contact the November 29 Committee for Palestine, Washington, D.C.

December 4

Film: Screening of the film *Beyond the Walls* at the West End Theater, Washington, D.C. at 7:30 p.m. Sponsored by Friends of Peace Now, for the benefit of the Peace Now Education Fund. Tickets — US 10 dollars.

Sulha

Continued from page 11

Jerusalem Judges

In Jerusalem, an eight-person committee on reconciliation who are mostly merchants of Hebronite origin, take the responsibility for solving problems the traditional way between Palestinians. Haj Daoud Wazwaz, a member of the committee, said, "If there is a crime committed in Jerusalem or in the West Bank, the relatives of the offender contact one of us. We call on each other to meet and go to the house of the victim to take the necessary *Atwa*. And then we proceed with the traditional reconciliation."

Wazwaz said that the verdict issued by the committee is one of consensus. Wazwaz began his work with traditional reconciliation in the 1950s.

In the same way, Haj Abdel-Karim al-Ghazali began working on reconciliation some 30 years ago. At first, his focus was on commercial disputes. Later he began to mediate in all kinds of cases.

"In the most serious cases that people ask us to resolve," said al-Ghazali, "we consult the Hebronite men of reconciliation. Bani Naim judges are known for their special talent in resolving murder and serious injury cases. In Hebron there are more than 40 men who deal with the traditional way of reconciliation.

Category of Judges

According to the Palestinian historian Aref al-Aref, there are several categories of judges who have different levels of authority. They are:

Malam: The opponents go to the house of the judge called *Malam*, who listens to their story, records their testimonies and then names the concerned judge. If one of the opponents disagrees, they then go to the elders of the village or *Kibar*.

Kibar: The *Kibar* have the authority to transfer the case to a judge. They also have the authority to reconcile or issue a verdict if the opponents want them to.

Ahal Dhyar: They issue verdicts on land, property, border disputes and inheritance cases.

Ahal Resah: They issue verdicts in cases involving the sale, the theft or injury of horses.

Manashed: They issue verdicts in cases of honor, or breaking and entering.

Zayoud and *Darabieh:* These deal with financial and trade cases. The *Darabieh* have less authority than the *Zayoud*.

Manage'a Dam: They deal with cases of injury and murder. ■

Fighting Ghosts

Continued from page 8&9

land deals were made at the *Tabu* Department, one lawyer said, and were made in absolute secrecy.

One lawyer said that often the land officer is in agreement with an Israeli company and that he will register a certain number of plots for the company. This requires opening a file for the land plot and attaching a serial number to it. Sometimes the land officer reserves a certain number of serial numbers for himself by which he registers the company's land plots. He keeps these files himself. When a lawyer for the landowners comes to the land office to see these files after his client has found his name and his land in the newspaper on a new registration advertisement, the office employee must tell him the files are with the land officer. When the lawyer goes to the land officer, as did Taha, the officer can refuse to show him the files.

Survey Department

Much is also said about the Survey Department. Approved land maps are essential for any new registration. Some lawyers say that it is now common knowledge that *simsars* or Israeli companies obtain such maps in only a few days while it takes others more than a year. The department is also criticized for not giving the correct dimensions of land to be newly registered by the *simsars* and companies. This was proven in the discrepancy in dimensions in the nine Bidya advertisements when the 1982 advertisements listed much larger amounts of land than the 1985 ads.

The Guardian of Absentee Property

The guardian of Absentee Property, who is supposed to guard the property of residents outside the country, is accused by lawyers of shirking his duty. When a certain piece of land under his authority is included in a new registration request by *simsars* or Israelis, he should object. Often he does not.

In addition, lawyers often discover that the guardian has tax records at the Treasury Department, with a note attached stating that they are for official use only, only to discover later that they were made available to *simsars* and other Israelis.

The Police

The police have failed many times to implement court orders on land disputes. In one instance, when lawyers requested the police in the Tulkarm region implement the court's order to stop building and bulldozing operations on their clients' lands, those authorities demanded instead that they be provided with land maps approved by the Survey Department, which normally takes more than a year to obtain. In the meantime, a whole settlement could be built on the land. It was known later that the chief of the police in that region was called in for investigation, but nothing further is known as yet.

In fact the carelessness of the police and their failure to listen to the demands of the Bidya villagers to implement the court's order was an indirect cause of the events which led to the murder of al-Aqra. Had the police interfered from the beginning, the villager's blood could have been spared.

The Courts

The position of the courts seems no better. In fact, the fire which destroyed the archives in the Nablus Court of Appeals is just an example. The demand of the court's judges to appoint a night watchman for the court went unheeded. As a result, most of the valuable land documents and cases were eaten up in the fire. Talking about this event is painful for many lawyers, but it is more painful for them to see armed *simsars* and collaborators move through the courts, either threatening the petitioners or buddying up to the judges. One lawyer said they behaved like this until very recently because even the judges feared them since they could easily interfere to remove a judge from his post.

The system of land fraud in the West Bank involves a solid chain of landsuckers clasped tightly around the neck of the unarmed Palestinian farmer who has nothing left except his steadfastness. He suffers, yes, but he is very proud that he is defending above all his honor. Anything is bearable to him except being accused of selling his own land, his honor. Fighting against these landsuckers, as lawyer Taha puts it, is like fighting ghosts, however. You know they are everywhere but they cannot be grasped. ■

Young supporters of *Neve Shalom* gather at the Oasis.

Neve Shalom: Putting Peace Talk into Action

by Awad Abdel Fattah

"For me this is a microcosm of the democratic, secular society which I dream of as a final solution to the Palestinian problem."

The words of Rayed Reziq sound very idealistic, especially when taking into account the present complex political developments in our area. But paying a visit to Neve Shalom (the Oasis of Peace) where a number of Jewish and Arab families have chosen to live in peaceful coexistence, one finds some basis for Reziq's belief, though not everyone there shares with him exactly the same vision.

At Neve Shalom, there are common basic elements which govern the life and work for peace between Arabs and Jews. Each side respects the other's opinion on different issues and generally agrees that both peoples should live together in this land. All the Jews who live there recognize the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, and the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians.

Life in Neve Shalom is not just an idle pastime, but is dynamic and full of work and discussion on social and political issues. Arab and Jewish students are invited to the Oasis on a regular basis to conduct discussions on various topics concerning the two sides. Over the last six years, some 7000 students have taken part in these discussions and workshops.

Begun As Interfaith Experiment

On a barren hill 30 kilometers west of Jerusalem rests the village of Neve Shalom. The land on which it stands belongs to the neighboring Latrun Monastery.

The Oasis of Peace is the only Arab-Jewish village within the 1948 borders of Israel whose purpose is to create a social framework in which Arabs and Jews live together on the basis of complete equality. The idea first began with a foreign monk called Bruno Hossar who envisioned it as an interfaith experiment in 1970. But since he based his idea on the assumption that the conflict between Jews and Arabs (both Muslims and Christians) is religious and not national, only a few people, mainly foreigners, were attracted to the idea.

In 1974, the few Arabs who had joined the project convinced Hossar that they should concentrate on the national aspect of the conflict. He agreed to turn over the Oasis to them and they formed a founding nucleus consisting of Jews and Arabs for the purpose of expanding the Oasis of Peace on a new principle. So far the families living there number 13, seven Jewish and six Arab. There are also 10 single people, making the village population 60.

Life in the Oasis

Life in the Oasis is conducted on a cooperative basis. "There is no private ownership here," said Elias Edi, 25, from al-Bqea'a in the Galilee, who is secretary of the village, a position which rotates equally between Jews and Arabs. "The small amount of property we have, like the houses, a few sheep and a plot of land, are owned collectively."

However, the village is not self-supporting. It relies mainly on foreign donations from churches and organizations which are interested in peace. Some members work outside the Oasis to support themselves. The rest are involved in the activities which the Oasis organizes such as a school and coexistence seminars.

The administrative positions are distributed by election and important decisions pertaining to the affairs of the village are taken at a general meeting.

A new member who applies to live there must be put to the test. "We should know everything about the applicant," said Eli, adding, "We choose people who support the idea and we prefer them with skills which could advance Neve Shalom activities." The new members are only accepted as official members after having lived for at least one year as a volunteer.

The Oasis is not recognized by the Israeli authorities which deprives it of governmental aid. Electricity and running water were only recently extended to the village at residents' expense. Most of the houses are built of wood and licenses for them were not easy to obtain. The two-kilometer road leading to the village is not paved. "This reflects the racist attitude of the Israeli authorities and their hostility to an independent peace project which is out from under their influence," said Diana Reziq from Nazareth, one of the Oasis education coordinators.

Bilingual and Bicultural Education Project

Living together in a small village is not the most important aspect of Neve Shalom. This admittedly would have no real influence on the general political system of the country. But it is the Oasis' educational program which has attracted the most people, both Jews and Arabs. It consists of two sections, a three grade elementary with kindergarten and a section for regular seminars and workshops.

In the elementary school, which is the greatest source of pride for the members of the Oasis, 17 Jewish and Arab children study in a bilingual and bicultural curriculum. "We hope to raise our children with a deep respect for peaceful coexistence," said Nava Zukhnestein, an education coordinator. The children are taught the two languages and cultures, but not at the expense of their own.

With regard to seminars which involve discussion between invited Jewish and Arab youths on various social and political subjects, they are organized three days a week and conducted by seven coordinators. Zukhnestein, 28, explained that they don't allow the students to start with very controversial issues. "We first give them the chance to recognize each other and discuss general issues on which they don't have much difference." At a more advanced stage, they allow a discussion of the problems experienced by each side.

In most cases discussions are heated, especially when there are pro-Meir Kahane youths. But the moderators always calm things down so that both sides can achieve results from the discussions. Zukhnestein said that the students who show more tolerance, understanding and ability toward community work are chosen for a group for whom special workshops are organized. The purpose, she said, is to enable these students to continue on in better promoting coexistence in their own schools.

Arab and Jewish children play together in their own little oasis of peace.

Neve Shalom's Influence

Visitors to Neve Shalom often wonder whether the Oasis peace project would have an influence on the political system of the country. Eilan Fresh, former secretary of the village, does not think so. "Our project is not political but educational," he said. Fresh moved from Kibbutz Kerem Shalom to Neve Shalom seven years ago to be involved in day-to-day coexistence and to work for mutual understanding. "But I believe," he said, "the educational program will lead also to a change in the political relations between the two peoples."

Fresh, 37, was involved in similar activities in other frameworks before he moved to Neve Shalom. But he began to despair of the usual method of Arab-Jewish rapprochement and cooperation, like taking part in joint demonstrations, meetings and symposiums. "That way is not successful in removing the fears and the stereotypes of each side," he said. "After a political meeting where the two sides speak about brotherhood and mutual understanding, each one goes back home and things end at this point."

For Fresh, the Oasis is very important. He believes the project is going in the right direction. "The Oasis presents, on the narrow level, an example of a social framework where Arabs and Jews can live together."

Critics of Neve Shalom have said in the past that the Israeli authorities may use the project for propaganda purposes. Fresh disagrees. "This is not true, because the Israeli authorities don't like the presence of experiments such as the Oasis," he said. He referred to the lack of any official financial or moral support for the project as proof of their dislike of it. Edi believes one possible explanation for their disapproval can be seen in the hassle they had over construction permits. The Israelis, among other things, are afraid of the possibility that the Jews will leave and the Arabs stay there, he said.

As this is the stand of the Israeli authorities and the stand of many of Israel's rightist parties and groups as well, the Jewish and Arab leftists have instead supported the idea. Salman Natour, a Palestinian writer from Daliat el-Karmel in Haifa, recently delivered a lecture on political literature in the Oasis. He said that "On the human and individual level, interest is good and it can be a strong response to those who claim that coexistence is impossible." On the political level, Natour believes the experiment is not influential. "I don't believe this could bring a real change in the existing system," he said.

Others among Israeli leftists feel the project is naive. Nevertheless, for the 13 families and 10 single adults living in the Oasis it seems to be working. And indeed for thousands of students able to take part in the educational program, Neve Shalom is a source of both information and inspiration for those willing to carry the message of peaceful coexistence back to their friends and family. ■